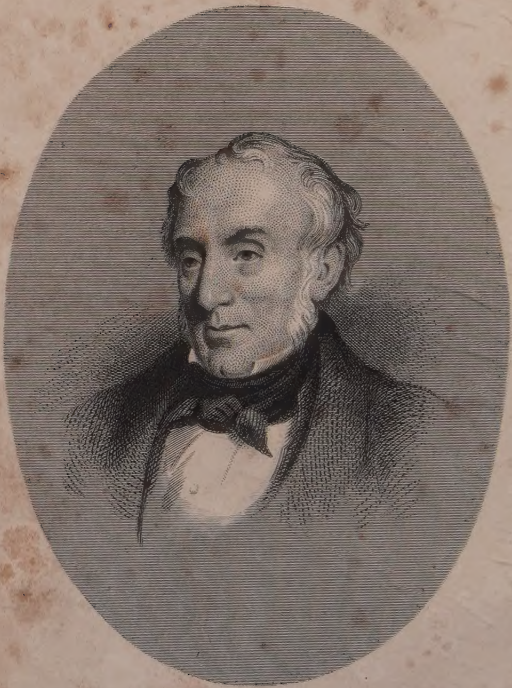

William Wordsworth

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

EDINBURGH:
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1863.

LIFE OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE life "of him that uttered nothing base," whose brows, in the language of his successor, made greener the laureate's crown, presents little of incident or adventure. It was a quiet home-life, finding scope enough for its physical and intellectual energies in walks amid the mountains and the glens of its native Cumberland, in the contemplation of tree and flower, purling brook and glassy lake, and in the companionship of a devoted intelligent sister and an attached and sensible wife—

> "A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food."

Of him, more than of most poets, it may be said his poetry was his life; his whole heart and soul were in his verse, and no one reading that carefully can fail to mistake his character. The details of his life, as well as its general features, are in his writings, for, as Horace said of Lucilius, he confided all his secrets to his lyre—"to it he communicated his feelings and his thoughts on every occasion of interest, public and private." His works are, in fact, a poetical autobiography, the dates of events alone being needed to render it perfectly complete; and in a few brief sentences the poet himself supplied the early portion of those dates, shortly before his death, to his nephew, whom he desired to write such notice of his life as should serve to illustrate his poems.

From his own short communication, and from facts gleaned from other sources by his biographer, we learn that William Wordsworth, the most distinguished metaphysical poet whom the world has seen, and whose influence may be said to have quite changed the character of the poetical literature of his own country, was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland, April 7, 1770. On both sides he was descended from a good old stock. In the curious little Yorkshire

village of Penistone, to which even the railway has failed to carry life save on market-days, the name of Wordsworth was familiar, probably before the era of William the Conqueror; and a name of note it was, too, if we might judge from the frequency with which it appears in the early annals of the parish. The subject of this memoir himself possessed a carved almery, made in 1525, at the expense of a William Wordsworth; and this relic carried the family pedigree four generations further back in the world's history than the date of its carving. His mother was daughter to one William Cookson, a mercer in Penrith, whose wife, again, was a Crackanthorp, whose family had resided at Newbiggen Hall in Westmoreland since the days of the third Edward. The father of the poet was in a good position, being law-agent to Sir James Lowther, who was afterwards Lord Lonsdale. William Wordsworth was the second son, and he had two brothers and a sister (the last his close companion through life) younger than himself.

The place of Wordsworth's birth was one well calculated to arouse poetic feelings. The picturesque streams of the Derwent and the Cocker meet and mingle near the spot where the ruins of the ancient castle frown down over the quaint little town; and Wordsworth, though but a mere child when he wandered along the banks of the meandering river, or stood in the shadow of the broken battlements, felt the inspiration of the scene. As he has beautifully said,

> "One, the fairest of all rivers, loved
> To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
> And from his fords and shallows sent a voice
> That flow'd along my dreams."

Wordsworth's mother died of consumption before he had completed his eighth year.

> "Early died
> My honour'd mother, she who was the heart
> And hinge of all our learnings and our loves.
> She left us destitute."

And ere he had reached his fourteenth year, his father, through the effects of a cold caught during a night's exposure on the mountains, was laid beside her in the grave.

One can scarcely realise that the calm, meditative, gravely-philosophical bard of Rydal Mount was a pert, froward, ill-tempered boy, such as to give his wise and pious mother more concern than all her other children. She was sagacious enough to note that the boy had in him the making of a remarkable man, and her anxiety was as to

whether his genius would unfold itself for good or for evil; and she would seem at times to have been almost afraid that the latter would predominate. "The cause of this," as Wordsworth informed his nephew, "was that I was of a stiff, moody, and violent temper; so much so that I remember going once into the attics of my grandfather's house at Penrith, upon some indignity having been put upon me, with the intention of destroying myself with one of the foils which I knew was kept there. I took the foil in hand, but my heart failed." It was lucky for the world that the little rascal's physical nature did recoil from the contact of the cold bright steel, that the warm life-blood rushed swift from the citadel of the heart through all the avenues of the body, protesting against the foul outrage and awful crime which the rebellious spirit meditated. What the poetry of this century would have been without the Wordsworthian influence, which, as the incident shews, was nearly extinguished in embryo, it is difficult to estimate with anything like exactitude, but one thing is quite certain, it would have been neither as natural nor as healthy as it is. Of the poet's passion for wanton ill-doing, when a boy, we have another instance: "Upon another occasion, while I was at my grandfather's house at Penrith, along with my eldest brother Richard, we were whipping tops together in the large drawing-room, on which the carpet was only laid down on particular occasions. The walls were hung round with family pictures, and I said to my brother, 'Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?' He replied, 'No, I won't.' 'Then,' said I, 'here goes,' and I struck my lash through her hooped petticoat, for which, no doubt, I was properly punished. But, possibly from some want of judgment in punishments inflicted, I had become perverse and obstinate in defying chastisement, and rather proud of it than otherwise." And the relics of this early ill-temper still remained after age had silvered the brown locks o'er, and would sometimes break out impetuously, and at the most unfitting opportunities through the general philosophic calm of the poet's life. While Wordsworth was yet alive, De Quincey, with somewhat questionable taste, referred to two occasions on which the poet's peevishness and ill-humour to those of his own household were made manifest even before strangers, and hints that if Mrs Wordsworth had not been unusually sweet-tempered, the domestic hearth at Rydal Mount would not have been without unseemly bickerings. But De Quincey being a little spiteful, it is well to accept such statements with caution.

Up to his mother's death, Wordsworth appears to have spent his time partly at Cockermouth and partly at Penrith, at which latter place his maternal grand-parents resided. Here he appears to have received the rudiments of education in one of those very primitive institutions which pass under the name of Dame's schools, the conductress of which appears to have been a kind, homely sort of person, whose system of instruction neither rose above nor sunk below that of her class in general.

In his ninth year, Wordsworth was removed to Hawkshead on the borders of Lancashire, where there was a good grammar-school of a couple of centuries' standing. The foundation did not provide for the lodgment of pupils in the building, and the boys attending the school were mostly lodged with "dames" in the village. Wordsworth was fortunate in being placed under the care of a most affectionate and motherly person named Anne Tyson, whose kind attentions he gratefully remembered and commemorated in the "Prelude." The supervision exercised over the boys out of school by the masters at Hawkshead does not appear to have been very strict, and the lads on many occasions often followed their games of hunting, skating, rowing, &c., far on into the night. Such a training, if not perhaps the best for making a scholar, was certainly one well calculated to promote the nascent faculties of a poetic youth. And to such a one the scene was quite as congenial as Cockermouth. Hawkshead lies in the peaceful Vale of Esthwaite, little more than a quarter of a mile from the lake of that name, upon which, in winter nights, the swift skates of the schoolboys—Wordsworth's among the swiftest of all—"hissed along the polished ice in games confederate," and not very far from those of Windermere and Coniston. Though comparatively tame in itself, Hawkshead was in the centre of great natural attractions. "The gorgeous scenery of Borrowdale, the austere sublimities of Wastdalehead, of Langdalehead or Mardale—these are almost too oppressive in their colossal proportions and their utter solitudes for encouraging a perfectly human interest. Now, taking Hawkshead as a centre, with a radius of about eight miles, one might describe a little circular tract which embosoms a perfect network of little valleys, separate wards, or cells, as it were, of one larger valley, walled in by the great leading mountains of the region, Grasmere, Easedale, Great and Little Langdale, Tilberthwaite, Yewdale, Elter Water, Loughrigg Tarn, Skelwith, and many other quiet nooks, lie within a single division of this labyrinthine district—all these are within one

summer afternoon's ramble. And amongst these, for the years of his boyhood, lay the daily excursions of Wordsworth." The impressions produced on Wordsworth by the scenery surrounding Hawkshead were never forgotten—they remained in his memory for ever fresh as when he beheld them, and in many a verse he presents them with a natural truthfulness and force which make the lonely student in his room feel as if the mountain breeze were rippling in his hair, as if the wavelets of the glassy lake were dancing at his very feet, and before his eyes the sunlight lying in broad bright streaks upon the hill-sides.

At Hawkshead Wordsworth appears to have remained until about his eighteenth year, learning only comparatively little Latin and somewhat less Greek; the works of Fielding, Swift, Cervantes, Goldsmith, Pope, and Gray being greatly more to his taste than dry school-books. In 1787, he was entered at St John's College, Cambridge; but during the four sessions he remained at the university there he in no way distinguished himself, nor, indeed, sought to do so, his apathy being a source of great chagrin to his uncles. Here, as at Hawkshead, he devoted himself more assiduously to the poets than to the schoolmen. His Cambridge residence had little influence upon his poetry; it had, like Cockermouth and Hawkshead, no pleasant memories for him, being altogether too constrained an existence for such a genuine child of nature as Wordsworth was. Instead of working at the abstruse mathematics for which his *alma mater* is famous, Wordsworth gave himself much up to desultory reading, and to the study of Italian. While yet at Hawkshead he had tried his poetic wings in a memorial ode, which was chiefly remarkable as a very good imitation of Pope; and now at Cambridge he began to look upon himself as a poet, but of a different school from that which the poet of Twickenham made famous. And even at this time he had too profound a sense of the dignity of the poet's calling to condescend to write a complimentary poem about one of the authorities of the college, thus missing, much to his uncle's disgust, the chance of distinguishing himself, and so of forwarding his worldly prospects.

During the vacation of 1790, he visited France with a Mr Jones, a fellow-collegian, and had all his sympathies enlisted in favour of the Girondist party of the French Revolution, then in its full tide of progress. In the beginning of the following year, he took his degree, and after spending a short time in London, he went over to France, where he resided, partly at Blois, Orleans, and Paris, for

about thirteen months, shewing such active sympathy, and maintaining such intimate relations with some of the leading Girondists, that it is not improbable his career might have been cut short by the guillotine, had he not been obliged to return to England a little before King Louis suffered death.

During the next three years, Wordsworth seems to have lived in a somewhat aimless fashion among his friends in London and elsewhere, and not very welcomely, as they were annoyed at him making no effort to support himself either by going into the church or by qualifying himself for the bar.

In 1793, he published "An Evening Walk," and "Descriptive Sketches," which fell almost still-born from the press, but there were a few men who recognised the genius evinced in the verses; among the rest, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who remarked concerning them, that "seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetical genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced."

In 1795, a young gentleman named Calvert, whose death-bed Wordsworth had attended, left him £900 as a token of his admiration of Wordsworth's poetic talent, expressing a desire that Wordsworth should devote himself entirely to the Muses. On this small sum Wordsworth and his sister, who now became his constant companion, and whose influence on his life and poetry is incalculable, contrived to live for seven years. When this sum was about exhausted, Lord Lonsdale, whose predecessor had failed to make good the just claims of £5000, which Wordsworth's father had against the Lonsdale estates at his death, paid the principal with interest, which amounted to £8500, and this was divided between the five children, and so the poet was once more placed above the fear of want, without having to labour. Wordsworth, throughout his life, was singularly fortunate in getting increase of wealth just at the very time he was needing it. De Quincey, with much quiet humour, relates some half-dozen instances in which the poet, almost at the very moment when more money became necessary, had it placed within his reach. In 1795, Wordsworth and his sister took a nice cottage near Crewkerne in Dorsetshire, in a beautiful and romantic country, such as poets love; and in August 1797, they removed to Alfoxden, Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, to be near Coleridge. During his residence at the first-named place, Wordsworth wrote his "Salisbury Plain," and the tragedy of the Borderers; and at Alfoxden he composed the "Lyrical Ballads," which were brought out by the distinguished provincial bookseller, Joseph Cottle of Bristol. Coleridge's

"Ancient Mariner" was published in the collection, which did not sell. The poets, however, calmly conscious of their own powers, appear to have been little affected by the inappreciation of the public. In 1798-9, the two travelled together in Germany, and in the latter year Wordsworth settled down at Grasmere. This retreat was still lovelier and more picturesque than any he had yet settled at. "From the gorge of Hammerscar, the whole vale of Grasmere suddenly breaks upon the view in a style of almost theatrical surprise, with its lovely valley stretching before the eye in the distance, the lake lying immediately below, with its solemn ark-like island of four-and-a-half acres in size, seemingly floating on its surface, and its exquisite outline on the opposite shore, revealing all its little bays and wild sylvan margin, feathered to the edge with wild-flowers and ferns. In one quarter, a little wood, stretching for about half-a-mile towards the outlet of the lake; more directly in opposition to the spectator, a few green fields, and beyond them, just two bow-shots from the water, a little white cottage gleaming from the midst of trees, with a vast and seemingly never-ending series of ascents, rising above it to the height of more than three thousand feet. That little cottage was Wordsworth's from the time of his marriage and earlier, in fact, from the beginning of the century to the year 1808." Afterwards it belonged to De Quincey.

In 1802 Wordsworth visited France, and on his return married Mary Hutchinson, whom he had known from childhood.

De Quincey thus describes Mrs Wordsworth as he saw her on his first visit, in the winter of 1807-8:—

"A tallish young woman, with the most winning expression of benignity upon her countenance, advanced to me, presenting her hand with so frank an air that all embarrassment must have fled in a moment before the native goodness of her manner. This was Mrs Wordsworth, cousin of the poet, and for the last five years or more, his wife. She was now mother of two children, a son and a daughter; and she furnished a remarkable proof how possible it is for a woman neither handsome nor even comely, according to the rigour of criticism—nay, generally pronounced very plain—to exercise all the practical fascination of beauty, through the mere compensatory charms of sweetness all but angelic, of simplicity the most entire, womanly self-respect and purity of heart speaking through all her looks, acts, and movements. *Words*, I was going to have added—but her words were few. In reality she talked so little, that Mr Slave-Trade Clarkson used to allege against her, that

she could only say, '*God bless you!*' Certainly her intellect was not of an active order; but, in a quiescent, reposing, meditative way, she appeared always to have a genial enjoyment from her own thoughts."

Of Wordsworth himself the same author draws the following likeness:—

"He was, upon the whole, not a well-made man. His legs were pointedly condemned by all female connoisseurs in legs; not that they were bad in any way which *would* force itself upon your notice; there was no absolute deformity about them; and undoubtedly they had been serviceable legs, beyond the average standard of human requisition; for I calculate upon good data, that with these identical legs, Wordsworth must have traversed a distance of 175,000 to 180,000 English miles—a mode of exertion which, to him, stood in the stead of alcohol and all other stimulants whatsoever to the animal spirits. But useful as they have proved themselves, the Wordsworthian legs were certainly not ornamental; and it was really a pity, as I agreed with a lady in thinking, that he had not another pair for evening-dress parties—when no boots lend their friendly aid to mask our imperfections from the eyes of female rigorists. A sculptor would certainly have disapproved of their contour. But the worst part of Wordsworth's person was the bust: there was a narrowness and a droop about the shoulders which became striking, and had an effect of meanness when brought into close juxtaposition with a figure of a more statuesque build. And yet Wordsworth was of a good height, (five feet ten,) and not a slender man; on the contrary, by the side of Southey, his limbs looked thick almost in a disproportionate degree. But the total effect of Wordsworth's person was always worst in a state of motion. Meantime, his face—that was one which would have made amends for greater defects of figure. Many such, and finer, I have seen among the portraits of Titian, and, in a later period, amongst those of Vandyke, from the great era of Charles I., as also from the Court of Elizabeth and of Charles II., but none which has more impressed me in my own time. Wordsworth's forehead—the real living forehead, as I have been in the habit of seeing it for more than five-and-twenty years, is not remarkable for its height, but it *is* perhaps remarkable for its breadth and expansive development. Neither are the eyes of Wordsworth 'large,' as is erroneously stated somewhere in 'Peter's Letters;' on the contrary, they are (I think) rather small; but *that* does not inter-

fere with their effect, which at times is fine, and suitable to his intellectual character. His eyes are not, under any circumstances, bright, lustrous, or piercing; but after a long day's toil in walking I have seen them assume an appearance the most solemn and spiritual that it is possible for the human eye to wear. The light which resides in them is at no time a superficial light; but, under favourable accidents, it is a light which seems to come from unfathomed depths; in fact, it is more truly entitled to be held 'the light that never was on sea or shore,' a light radiating from some far spiritual world, than any, the most idealizing, that ever yet a painter's hand created. The nose a little arched, and large, which has always been accounted an unequivocal expression of animal appetites organically strong. And that expressed the simple truth; Wordsworth's intellectual passions were fervent and strong; but they rested upon a basis of preternatural animal sensibility, diffused through *all* the animal passions or appetites; and something of that will be found to hold of all poets who have been great by original force and power. The mouth and the whole circumjacencies of the mouth composed the strongest feature in Wordsworth's face; there was nothing specially to be noticed that I know of in the mere outline of the lips; but the swell and protrusion of the parts above and around the mouth are both noticeable in themselves, and also because they remind me (De Quincey) of a portrait of Milton, whose excellence was attested by the Blind Bard's daughter."

Wordsworth was so like Milton in personal appearance that De Quincey, in another place, says that Richardson's head of the great author of "Paradise Lost" "presented not only by far the best likeness of Wordsworth, but of Wordsworth in the prime of his powers. . . . . Not one member of that (the Wordsworthian) family but was as much impressed as myself with the accuracy of the likeness. All the peculiarities even were retained—a drooping appearance of the eyelids, that remarkable swell which I have noticed about the mouth, the way in which the hair lay upon the forehead. In two points only there was a deviation from the rigorous truth of Wordsworth's features—the face was a little too short and too broad, and the eyes were too large."

By his wife Wordsworth had five children—John, born in 1803; Dora, 1804; Thomas, 1806; Catherine, 1808, and William, 1810. Thomas and Catherine died when they were children, and his beloved daughter, Dora, died in 1847.

In 1808, Wordsworth removed to Allan Bank, a house within the

same district as the one he left; and, in 1813, he changed to Rydal Mount, still in the region of his beloved lakes and hills, where he remained until the day of his death. From the time of his marriage to his taking up house at Rydal Mount, he had to fight his hardest battle with the critics; the most powerful of whom, perhaps, was Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*. But the heavy hitting of the reviewer and the clever ridicule of the brothers Smith were in the end forced to give way to the earnestness, the truth, beauty, and force of the teachings and the descriptions of the despised "Lakers," of whom Wordsworth was the chief. All men of taste and ability in the end grew ashamed of laughing at that which they could not but acknowledge bore the impress and breathed the spirit of nature, and freeing themselves by degrees from the chains of the artificialism in which the genius of Pope had fettered them, at last stood confessed admirers and advocates of the new school of poetry. There was, however, at least one critic who recognised from the first the excellence of the Wordsworthian verse, and who was not slow to express his opinion—that critic was the late Professor John Wilson, (Christopher North.)

In one of his later essays, when Wordsworth, thanks in no small measure to Wilson, was beginning to grow famous, the latter thus writes of him:—"We believe that Wordsworth's genius has now a greater influence on the spirit of poetry in Britain than was ever exercised by any individual mind. He was the first man who impregnated all his descriptions of external nature with sentiment and passion. In this he has been followed—often successfully—by two poets. He was the first man that vindicated the native dignity of human nature, by shewing that all her elementary feelings were capable of poetry—and in that, too, he has been followed by other true poets, although here he stands, and probably ever will stand, unapproached. He was the first man that stripped thought and passion of all vain or foolish disguises, and shewed them in their just proportions and unencumbered power. He was the first man who, in poetry, knew the real province of language, and suffered it not to veil the meanings of the spirit. In all these things—and in many more—Wordsworth is indisputably the most original poet of the age; and it is impossible in the very nature of things that he ever can be eclipsed."

In 1800, a second edition of the "Lyrical Ballads," with numerous additions, was published in two volumes; and editions of the same work were also issued in 1802 and 1805. Two years after the last-

mentioned date, he published "Poems" in two volumes; and in 1809, an "Essay on the Convention of Cintra." Meanwhile he was labouring industriously upon that great philosophical poem which was never finished, but of which the "Prelude" and the "Excursion" are magnificent fragments. The latter appeared in 1814, but not until after his death was the "Prelude" given to the world, though it is understood that it was completed as early as 1805. Of works published subsequently to the "Excursion," 1815, may be mentioned the "White Doe of Rylstone," "Laodamia," "Dion," "Ode to Lycoris," &c., 1814, 1816, and 1817, respectively; "Peter Bell," "The Waggoner," "Sonnets on the River Duddon," all about 1819; and "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," and "Yarrow Revisited," later.

The whole of his poems were afterwards classified and published in six volumes by the author, as poems referring to the period of childhood; poems founded on the affections; poems of the fancy; poems of the imagination, &c. On the death of Southey, in 1843, the Lord Chamberlain wrote to Wordsworth informing him that he had recommended the Queen to appoint him (Wordsworth) as successor to his late friend, and that her Majesty had approved the recommendation. Wordsworth, however, declined the high honour on the ground that it entailed duties too onerous for one of his advanced age. In two days after, the Lord Chamberlain wrote again, pressing the appointment upon him, and he was backed up by a letter from Sir Robert Peel, then Prime Minister, who remarked :— "The offer was made to you by the Lord Chamberlain with my entire concurrence, not for the purpose of imposing on you any onerous or disagreeable duties, but in order to pay you that tribute of respect which is justly due to the first of living poets. The Queen entirely approved of the nomination, and there is a unanimous feeling on the part of all who have heard of the proposal (and it is pretty generally known) that there could not be a question about the selection. Do not be deterred by the fear of any obligations which the appointment may be supposed to imply. I will undertake that you shall have nothing *required* from you." It was of course impossible to resist such flattering appeals, and Wordsworth accepted the bays with the pension of £300 a-year which came along with them. It was well, however, that he had accepted the laureate's crown on the condition that he was to be exempted from the responsibilities it had formerly entailed, as he seldom, almost never, struck the lyre after the honour was conferred upon him.

He died on the 23d of April 1850 from the effects of a cold caught

on the 10th of March—"passing away almost insensibly, exactly at twelve o'clock, while the cuckoo-clock was striking the hour." Coleridge, in his "Biographia Literaria," has given an estimate of his poetical character which, as applying to the mass of his poems, is so just and true, as well as so felicitously expressed, that we prefer transcribing it, as a finish to this necessarily brief sketch, to making any remarks of our own :—

"*First*, An austere purity of language, both grammatically and logically; in short, a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning. *Secondly*, A correspondent weight and sanity of the thoughts and sentiments, won, not from books, but from the poet's own meditations. They are fresh, and have the dew upon them. Even throughout his smaller poems, there is not one which is not rendered valuable by some just and original reflection. *Thirdly*, The sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs; the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction. *Fourthly*, The perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions, as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives a physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. *Fifthly*, A meditative pathos—a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy indeed of a contemplator rather than a fellow-sufferer and co-mate, (*spectator, haud particeps,*) but of a contemplation from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind, or weather, or toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine. *Last*, And pre-eminently, I challenge for the poet the gift of imagination in the highest sense of the word. In the play of *fancy*, Wordsworth, to my feelings, is always graceful and recondite. The *likeness* is occasionally too strange, or demands too peculiar a point of view, or is such as appears the creature of predetermined research, rather than spontaneous presentation. Indeed, his fancy seldom displays itself as mere unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakspeare and Milton, and yet in a mind perfectly unborrowed, and his own. To employ his own words, which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed, to all thoughts and to all objects,

> 'Add the gleam,
> The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream.'"

CONTENTS.

Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood.

	PAGE
"My heart leaps up when I behold,"	1
To a Butterfly,	1
Foresight,	2
Characteristics of a Child three years old,	2
Address to a Child during a boisterous winter evening,	3
The Mother's Return,	4
Lucy Gray,	5
Alice Fell,	7
We are Seven,	8
Anecdote for Fathers,	10
Rural Architecture,	11
The Pet Lamb,	12
The Idle Shepherd-boys,	14
To H. C.,	16
Influence of Natural Objects,	17
The Blind Highland Boy,	18

Juvenile Pieces.

Extract from the Conclusion of a Poem composed upon leaving School,	25
An Evening Walk,	25
Descriptive Sketches,	33
The Female Vagrant,	40

Poems Founded on the Affections.

	PAGE
The Brothers,	46
The Sparrow's Nest,	57
To a Butterfly,	57
A Farewell,	58
Stanzas written in my Pocket Copy of Thomson's "Castle of Indolence,"	59
Ellen Irwin,	61
"Strange fits of passion I have known,"	62
"She dwelt among the untrodden ways,"	63
"I travell'd among unknown men,	63
Louisa,	63
"'Tis said that some have died for love,"	64
The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman,	65
The Last of the Flock,	67
A Complaint,	69
Ruth,	69
The Cottager to her Infant,	75
The Sailor's Mother,	75
The Childless Father,	76
The Affliction of Margaret —— of ——,	77
"Once in a lonely hamlet I sojourn'd,"	79
"Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,"	81
The Idiot Boy,	83
Michael,	93
Laodamia,	104

Poems of the Fancy.

To the Daisy,	109
"A whirl-blast from behind the hill,"	111
"With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the sky,"	111
The Green Linnet,	111
To the Small Celandine,	112
To the same Flower,	114
The Waterfall and the Eglantine,	115
The Oak and the Broom,	116
The Redbreast and the Butterfly,	119
To the Daisy,	120

PAGE
To the same Flower, ... 121
To a Skylark, ... 121
To a Sexton, ... 122
"Who fancied what a pretty sight," 123
Song for the Wandering Jew, ... 123
The Seven Sisters, ... 124
"By their floating mill," 125
The Kitten and the Falling Leaves, ... 126
A Fragment, ... 129
Address to my Infant Daughter, ... 130

Poems of the Imagination.

"There was a boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs," 133
To the Cuckoo, ... 134
A Night-piece, ... 134
Yew-trees, ... 134
View from the top of Black Comb, Cumberland, ... 136
Nutting, ... 137
"She was a phantom of delight," 138
"O nightingale! thou surely art," 138
"Three years she grew in sun and shower," 139
"A slumber did my spirit seal," 140
The Horn of Egremont Castle, ... 140
Goody Blake and Harry Gill, ... 143
"I wander'd lonely as a cloud," 146
The Reverie of Poor Susan, ... 146
Power of Music, ... 147
Stepping Westward, ... 148
Glen-Almain, ... 148
To a Highland Girl, ... 149
The Solitary Reaper, ... 151
"The cock is crowing," 152
Gipsies, ... 152
Beggars, ... 153
Yarrow Unvisited, ... 154
Yarrow Visited, ... 155
Star-gazers, ... 157
Resolution and Independence, ... 158
The Thorn, ... 161

PAGE
Hart-leap Well, ... 167
Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, ... 171
The Echo, ... 175
French Revolution, as it appeared to Enthusiasts at its Commencement, ... 176
"It is no spirit who from heaven hath flown," 177
Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey, ... 177

Poems Proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection.

Lines left upon a seat in a yew-tree, ... 181
Character of the Happy Warrior, ... 182
Rob Roy's Grave, ... 184
A Poet's Epitaph, ... 187
Expostulation and Reply, ... 188
The Tables turned, ... 189
To the Sons of Burns, after visiting their Father's grave, ... 190
To the Spade of a Friend, ... 191
"A fig for your languages, German and Norse," 192
"It is the first mild day of March," 193
To a Young Lady, who had been reproached for taking long walks in the country, ... 194
"I heard a thousand blended notes," 194
Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman, ... 195
Andrew Jones, ... 197
"If nature, for a favourite child," 198
The Two April Mornings, ... 199
The Fountain, ... 201
Lines written while sailing in a boat at evening, ... 202
Remembrance of Collins, ... 203
Personal Talk, ... 203
Incident characteristic of a Favourite Dog, ... 205
Tribute to the Memory of the same Dog, ... 206
The Force of Prayer, ... 207
Fidelity, ... 208
Ode to Duty, ... 210

Miscellaneous Sonnets.

PAGE
"Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room," 212
Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture,..... 212
"The fairest, brightest hues of ether fade," 212
"Weak is the will of man, his judgment blind," 213
"Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour," 213
"The shepherd, looking eastward, softly said," 213
"How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks," 214
"Where lies the land to which yon ship must go," 214
"Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress," 214
"Mark the concentrated hazels that enclose," 215
"Dark, and more dark, the shades of evening fell," 215
"These words were utter'd in a pensive mood," 215
"Degenerate Douglas! oh, the unworthy lord," 216
To the Poet John Dyer, ... 216
To Sleep, ... 217
To Sleep, ... 217
To Sleep, ... 217
"With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh," 218
To the River Duddon,..... 218
From the Italian of Michael Angelo, ... 218
To the Supreme Being (from the same,)..... 219
From the Italian of Michael Angelo, ... 219
To the Lady Beaumont,..... 219
"The world is too much with us; late and soon," 220
"Calm is all nature as a resting wheel," 220
"Earth has not anything to shew more fair," 220
"Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side," 221
"Brook! whose society the poet seeks," 221
Admonition,..... 222
"'Beloved vale!' I said, 'when I shall con," 222
"Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne," 222
"Surprised by joy—impatient as the wind," 223
"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free," 223
"What need of clamorous bells or ribbons gay," 223
On approaching Home after a tour in Scotland,..... 224
"From the dark chambers of dejection freed," 224
To the memory of Raisley Calvert, ... 224

Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty.

PAGE
"Fair star of evening, splendour of the west," 226
"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind," 226
"Jones! when from Calais southward you and I," 227
"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain," 227
"Festivals have I seen that were not names," 227
On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic, ... 228
The King of Sweden, ... 228
To Toussaint l'Ouverture, ... 228
"We had a fellow-passenger who came," 229
"Dear fellow-traveller, here we are once more," 229
"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood," 229
Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland, ... 230
"O friend! I know not which way I must look," 230
"Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour," 231
"Great men have been among us; hands that penn'd," 231
"It is not to be thought of that the flood," 231
"When I have borne in memory what has tamed," 232
"One might believe that natural miseries," 232
"There is a bondage which is worse to bear," 232
"These times touch money'd worldlings with dismay," 233
"England! the time is come when thou shouldst wean," 233
"When, looking on the present face of things," 233
To the Men of Kent, ... 234
"Six thousand veterans practised in war's game," 234
"Shout, for a mighty victory is won," 234
"Another year! another deadly blow," 235

Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty.

From 1807 to 1813.

On a Celebrated Event in Ancient History, ... 236
Upon the same Event, ... 236
To Thomas Clarkson, ... 237
A Prophecy, ... 237
"Not 'mid the world's vain objects that enslave," 237

PAGE
"I dropp'd my pen, and listen'd to the wind," 238
Hoffer, ... 238
"Advance! come forth from thy Tyrolean ground," 238
Feelings of the Tyrolese, ... 239
"Alas! what boots the long, laborious quest," 239
"And is it among rude untutor'd dales," 239
"O'er the wide earth, on mountain and on plain," 240
On the Final Submission of the Tyrolese, ... 240
"Hail, Zaragossa! if with unwet eye," 240
"Say, what is honour? 'Tis the finest sense," 241
"The martial courage of a day is vain," 241
"Brave Schill! by death deliver'd, take thy flight," 241
"Call not the Royal Swede unfortunate," 242
"Look now on that adventurer who hath paid," 242
"Is there a power that can sustain and cheer," 242
"Ah! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen," 243
"In due observance of an ancient rite," 243
Feelings of a Noble Biscayan at one of these Funerals, ... 243
The Oak of Guernica, ... 244
Indignation of a high-minded Spaniard, ... 244
"Avaunt all specious pliancy of mind," 245
"O'erweening statesman have full long relied," 245
The French and the Spanish Guerillas, ... 245
Spanish Guerillas, ... 246
"The power of armies is a visible thing," 246
"Here pause; the poet claims at least this praise," 246
"Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright," 247

Thanksgiving Odes.

Ode for the Morning of the Day appointed for a General Thanksgiving, ... 248
"When the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch," 255

Miscellaneous Pieces.

Inscription for a National Monument in Commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo, ... 259
Occasioned by the same Battle. February, 1816, ... 259

PAGE
"Oh! for a kindling touch of that pure flame,"..... 259
"While not a leaf seems faded—while the fields,"..... 260
"How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright,"..... 260
To B. R. Haydon, Esq.,..... 261
Composed in Recollection of the Expedition of the French into Russia,..... 261
Sonnet on the same Occasion,..... 262
On the Disinterment of the Remains of the Duke d'Enghien,..... 262
Ode—"Who rises on the banks of Seine,"..... 263
Elegiac Verses,..... 264

Poems on the Naming of Places.

"It was an April morning: fresh and clear,"..... 266
To Joanna,..... 267
"There is an eminence,—of these our hills,"..... 269
"A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags,"..... 269
To M. H.,..... 271
"When, to the attractions of the busy world,"..... 272

Inscriptions.

Written with a slate-pencil, upon a stone, the largest of a heap lying near a deserted quarry, upon one of the islands at Rydale,..... 275
Written with a slate-pencil, on a stone, on the side of the mountain of Black Comb, Cumberland,..... 276
In the grounds of Coleorton, the seat of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., Leicestershire,..... 276
In a garden of the same,..... 277
Written at the request of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., and in his name, for an urn, placed by him at the termination of a newly-planted avenue in the same grounds,..... 277
For a seat in the groves of Coleorton,..... 278
Written with a pencil, upon a stone, in the wall of the house (an out-house) on the island at Grasmere,..... 278

Poems Referring to the Period of Old Age.

PAGE
The Old Cumberland Beggar,..... 280
The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale,..... 284
The Small Celandine,..... 286
Animal Tranquillity and Decay,..... 287
The Two Thieves,..... 287
The Matron of Jedburgh and her Husband,..... 288
"Though narrow be that old man's cares, and near,"..... 290
For the spot where the Hermitage stood on St Herbert's Island, Derwentwater,..... 290

Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems.

Epitaphs translated from Chiabrera :—
"Perhaps some needful service of the state,"..... 292
"O thou who movest onward with a mind,"..... 292
"There never breathed a man who, when his life,"..... 293
"Destined to war from very infancy,"..... 293
"Not without heavy grief of heart did he,"..... 294
"Pause, courteous spirit!—Balbi supplicates,"..... 294
Lines composed at Grasmere during a walk, one evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a newspaper that the dissolution of Mr Fox was hourly expected,..... 295
Lines written November 13, 1814, on a blank leaf, in a copy of the Author's poem "The Excursion," upon hearing of the death of the late vicar of Kendal,..... 296
Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a picture of Peele Castle in a storm, painted by Sir George Beaumont,..... 296
To the Daisy,..... 298

Ode.

Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,..... 300

The Excursion.

PAGE
Book I.—The Wanderer, ... 305
Book II.—The Solitary, ... 330
Book III.—Despondency, ... 350
Book IV.—Despondency Corrected, ... 371
Book V.—The Pastor, ... 409
Book VI.—The Churchyard among the Mountains, ... 422
Book VII.—The Churchyard among the Mountains—*continued*, ... 450
Book VIII.—The Parsonage, ... 473
Book IX.—Discourse of the Wanderer, and an Evening Visit to the Lake, ... 486

The White Doe of Rylstone.

Canto First, ... 505
Canto Second, ... 514
Canto Third, ... 520
Canto Fourth, ... 527
Canto Fifth, ... 532
Canto Sixth, ... 536
Canto Seventh, ... 540

WORDSWORTH'S POETICAL WORKS.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

Stay near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
I follow'd on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! fear'd to brush
The dust from off its wings.

FORESIGHT,

OR THE CHARGE OF A CHILD TO HIS YOUNGER COMPANION.

THAT is work of waste and ruin—
Do as Charles and I are doing!
Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,
We must spare them—here are many:
Look at it—the flower is small,
Small and low, though fair as any;
Do not touch it! summers two
I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!
Pull as many as you can.
Here are daisies, take your fill!
Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:
Of the lofty daffodil
Make your bed, and make your bower;
Fill your lap, and fill your bosom;
Only spare the strawberry-blossom.

Primroses, the spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them;
Violets, a barren kind,
Wither'd on the ground must lie;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favour'd strawberry-flower,
When the months of spring are fled,
Hither let us bend our walk;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower;
And for that promise spare the flower!

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD.

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild;
And innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes,
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,

Not less if unattended and alone,
Than when both young and old sit gather'd round
And take delight in its activity,
Even so this happy creature of herself
Is all-sufficient: solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couch'd;
Unthought-of, unexpected as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow flowers;
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-colour'd images impress'd
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

ADDRESS TO A CHILD DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING.

BY A FEMALE FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.

WHAT way does the wind come? What way does he go?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,
Through wood and through vale; and o'er rocky height
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight.
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And ring a sharp 'larum;—but if you should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow,
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were cover'd with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock;
Yet seek him—and what shall you find in the place?
Nothing but silence and empty space.
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left for a bed for beggars or thieves!

As soon as 'tis daylight, to-morrow, with me,
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That look'd up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show!

Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down like men in a battle.
But let him range round, he does us no harm;
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm;
Untouch'd by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,—hush! that half-stifled knell,
Methinks 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.

Come, now we'll to bed! and when we are there,
He may work his own will, and what shall we care;
He may knock at the door,—we'll not let him in,
May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN.

BY THE SAME.

A MONTH sweet little ones, is past
Since your dear mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessed tidings! thought of joy!
The eldest heard with steady glee;
Silent he stood; then laugh'd amain,—
And shouted, "Mother, come to me!

Louder and louder did he shout
With witless hope to bring her near;
"Nay, patience! patience, little boy!
Your tender mother cannot hear."

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through;—
He listens, puzzled, sore perplex'd,
But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day,
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his sister's glee;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun,
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook's side,
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talk'd of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And "all since mother went away!"

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

But, see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

'Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race;
I too, infected by their mood,
I could have join'd the wanton chase.

Five minutes past—and oh the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

LUCY GRAY;

OR SOLITUDE.

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And when I cross'd the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade, Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor—
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, father, will I gladly do!
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon."

At this the father raised his hook
And snapp'd a faggot band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wander'd up and down:
And many a hill did Lucy climb;
But never reach'd the town.

The wretched parents all that night,
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlook'd the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

And, turning homeward, now they cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet!"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downward from the steep hill's edge
They track'd the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall:

And then an open field they cross'd:
The marks were still the same;
They track'd them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

HC

They follow'd from the snowy bank
The footmarks one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

ALICE FELL.

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had drown'd,
When suddenly I seem'd to hear
A moan, a lamentable sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound—and more and more;
It seem'd to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy call'd out;
He stopp'd his horses at the word;
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smack'd his whip, and fast
The horses scamper'd through the rain;
And soon I heard upon the blast
The voice, and bade him halt again.

Said I, alighting on the ground,
"What can it be, this piteous moan?"
And there a little girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

"My cloak!" the word was last and first,
And loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her very heart would burst;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

"What ails you, child?" She sobb'd, "Look here!"
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scarecrow dangled.

'Twas twisted betwixt nave and spoke;
Her help she lent, and with good heed
Together we released the cloak;
A wretched, wretched rag indeed!

"And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?"
"To Durham," answer'd she, half wild—
"Then come with me into the chaise."

She sate like one past all relief;
Sob after sob she forth did send
In wretchedness, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

"My child, in Durham do you dwell?"
She check'd herself in her distress,
And said, "My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

"And I to Durham, sir, belong."
And then, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tatter'd cloak.

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and sitting by my side,
As if she 'd lost her only friend,
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

"And let it be of duffel gray,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!"
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell!

WE ARE SEVEN.

A SIMPLE child
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl:
She was eight years old she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That cluster'd round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering look'd at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answer'd, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And in the churchyard cottage I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet maid, how this may be?"

Then did the little maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little maid replied;
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit—
I sit and sing to them.

"And often after sunset, sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was little Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the churchyard she was laid;
And all the summer dry,
Together round her grave we play'd,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
The little maiden did reply,
"O master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away: for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS;

SHEWING HOW THE PRACTICE OF LYING MAY BE TAUGHT.

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we stroll'd on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
To think—and think—and think again;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

My boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And oftentimes I talk'd to him
In very idleness.

The young lambs ran a pretty race,
The morning sun shone bright and warm;

"Kilve," said I, "was a pleasant place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

"My little boy, which like you more,"
I said, and took him by the arm—
"Our home by Kilve's delightful shore,
Or here at Liswyn farm?

"And tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and held him by the arm,
"At Kilve's smooth shore by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

In careless mood he look'd at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

"Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why?"
"I cannot tell, I do not know."
"Why, this is strange," said I;

"For here are woods and green hills warm;
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this my boy hung down his head,
He blush'd with shame, nor made reply;
And five times to the child I said,
"Why, Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain,
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock;
And thus to me he made reply:
"At Kilve there was no weathercock,
And that's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

RURAL ARCHITECTURE.

THERE's George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheek'd schoolboys, the highest not more

Than the height of a counsellor's bag;
To the top of Great How * did it please them to climb;
And there they built up, without mortar or lime,
A man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gather'd up as they lay;
They built him and christen'd him all in one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale;
And so without scruple they call'd him Ralph Jones.
Now Ralph is renown'd for the length of his bones;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the north
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the giant away.
And what did these schoolboys?—The very next day
They went and they built up another.

THE PET LAMB.

A PASTORAL.

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, "Drink, pretty creature, drink!"
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb, with a maiden at its side.

No other sheep were near, the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tether'd to a stone:
With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel,
While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seem'd to feast with head and ears; and his tail with pleasure shook.
"Drink, pretty creature, drink," she said in such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own.

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!
I watch'd them with delight; they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can, the maiden turn'd away;
But ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps did she stay.

Towards the lamb she look'd; and from that shady place,
I, unobserved, could see the workings of her face;
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little maid might sing:—

* "Great How" is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

"What ails thee, young one? What? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? Well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be;
Rest, little young one, rest; what is 't that aileth thee?

"What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs, are they not strong? And beautiful thou art:
This grass is tender grass; these flowers they have no peers;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears!

"If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst gain;
For rain and mountain storms, the like thou need'st not fear;—
The rain and storm are things which scarcely can come here.

"Rest, little young one, rest; thou hast forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places far away:
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert own'd by none;
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

"He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home:
A blessed day for thee! then whither wouldst thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that did thee yean
Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have been.

"Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is, and new.

"Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,
Then I 'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough;
My playmate thou shalt be; and when the wind is cold,
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

"It will not, will not rest!—poor creature, can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is working so in thee?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

"Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and fair!
I 've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

"Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again!"

As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat;
And it seem'd, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was *mine*.

Again, and once again did I repeat the song;
"Nay," said I, "more than half to the *damsel* must belong,
For she look'd with such a look, and she spake with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own."

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS; OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE.*

A PASTORAL.

I.

The valley rings with mirth and joy;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never, never-ending song
To welcome in the May:
The magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food;
Or through the glittering vapours dart
In very wantonness of heart.

II.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun;
It seems they have no work to do,
Or that their work is done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,
Their rusty hats they trim:
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those shepherds wear the time away.

III.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee; and more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal;
They never hear the cry,

* *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland, is a short, and, for the most part, a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. *Force* is the word universally employed in these dialects for waterfall.

That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

IV.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
"Down to the stump of yon old yew
We 'll for our whistles run a race."
——Away the shepherds flew.
They leapt—they ran—and when they came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
"Stop!" to his comrade Walter cries—
James stopp'd with no good will:
Said Walter then, "Your task is here,
'Twill keep you working half a year.

V.

"Now cross where I shall cross—come on,
And follow me where I shall lead."
The other took him at his word;
But did not like the deed.
It was a spot, which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go:
Into a chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock:
The gulf is deep below;
And in a basin black and small
Receives a lofty waterfall.

VI.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger began his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gain'd
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan—
Again!—his heart within him dies—
His pulse is stopp'd, his breath is lost—
He totters, pale as any ghost,
And, looking down, he spies
A lamb that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

VII.

The lamb had slipp'd into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn.

The lamb, still swimming round and round,
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

VIII.

When he had learnt what thing it was
That sent this rueful cry, I ween,
The boy recover'd heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferr'd their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid;—
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither stray'd;
And there the helpless lamb he found,
By those huge rocks encompass'd round.

IX.

He drew it gently from the pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Said they, "He 's neither maim'd nor scarr'd."
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD.

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
Thou fairy voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
That art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;

And grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
Oh! too industrious folly!
Oh! vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite,
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Not framed to undergo unkindly shocks;
Or to be trail'd along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives;
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.*

Wisdom and spirit of the universe!
Thou soul that art the eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,—
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours, rolling down the valleys, made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, I homeward went

* This extract is reprinted from "The Friend."

In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
'Twas mine among the fields both day and night,
And by the waters all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons;—happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
It was a time of rapture!—Clear and loud
The village clock toll'd six—I wheel'd about,
Proud and exulting, like an untired horse
That cares not for its home.—All shod with steel,
We hiss'd along the polish'd ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tingled like iron; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the image of a star,
That gleam'd upon the ice; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopp'd short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheel'd by me—even as if the earth had roll'd
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watch'd
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY.

A TALE TOLD BY THE FIRESIDE.

Now we are tired of boisterous joy,
We've romp'd enough, my little boy!

Jane hangs her head upon my breast,
And you shall bring your stool and rest;
This corner is your own.

There! take your seat, and let me see
That you can listen quietly;
And, as I promised, I will tell
That strange adventure which befell
A poor blind Highland boy.

A *Highland* boy!—why call him so?
Because, my darlings, ye must know,
In land where many a mountain towers—
Far higher hills than these of ours—
He from his birth had lived.

He ne'er had seen one earthly sight;
The sun, the day; the stars, the night;
Or tree, or butterfly, or flower,
Or fish in stream, or bird in bower,
Or woman, man, or child.

And yet he neither droop'd nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind;
For God took pity on the boy,
And was his friend, and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know.

His mother too, no doubt, above
Her other children him did love:
For, was she here, or was she there,
She thought of him with constant care,
And more than mother's love.

And proud she was of heart, when, clad
In crimson stockings, tartan plaid,
And bonnet with a feather gay,
To kirk he on the Sabbath-day
Went hand in hand with her.

A dog, too, had he,—not for need,
But one to play with and to feed;
Which would have led him, if bereft
Of company or friends, and left
Without a better guide.

And then the bagpipes he could blow,
And thus from house to house would go,
And all were pleased to hear and see;
For none made sweeter melody
Than did the poor blind boy.

Yet he had many a restless dream;
Both when he heard the eagles scream,

And when he heard the torrents roar,
And heard the water beat the shore
Near which their cottage stood.

Beside a lake their cottage stood,
Not small, like ours, a peaceful flood,
But one of mighty size, and strange,
That, rough or smooth, is full of change,
And stirring in its bed.

For to this lake, by night and day,
The great sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills,
And drinks up all the pretty rills,
And rivers large and strong;

Then hurries back the road it came—
Returns on errand still the same;
This did it when the earth was new,
And this for evermore will do,
As long as earth shall last.

And, with the coming of the tide,
Come boats and ships, that sweetly ride
Between the woods and lofty rocks;
And to the shepherds with their flocks
Bring tales of distant lands.

And of those tales, whate'er they were,
The blind boy always had his share;
Whether of mighty towns, or vales
With warmer suns and softer gales,
Or wonders of the deep.

Yet more it pleased him, more it stirr'd,
When from the water-side he heard
The shouting and the jolly cheers,
The bustle of the mariners,
In stillness or in storm.

But what do his desires avail?
For he must never handle sail,
Nor mount the mast, nor row, nor float
In sailor's ship or fisher's boat,
Upon the rocking waves.

His mother often thought, and said,
What sin would be upon her head
If she should suffer this: "My son,
Whate'er you do, leave this undone;
The danger is so great."

Thus lived he by Loch Leven's side,
Still sounding with the sounding tide,

And heard the billows leap and dance,
Without a shadow of mischance,
Till he was ten years old.

When, one day (and now mark me well
Ye soon shall know how this befell,)
He 's in a vessel of his own,
On the swift water hurrying down
Towards the mighty sea.

In such a vessel, never more
May human creature leave the shore !—
If this or that way he should stir,
Woe to the poor blind mariner !
For death will be his doom.

But say what bears him ?—Ye have seen
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright,
Gifts which, for wonder or delight,
Are brought in ships from far.

Such gifts had those seafaring men
Spread round that haven in the glen :
Each hut, perchance, might have its own,
And to the boy they all were known;
He knew and prized them all.

And one, the rarest, was a shell
Which he, poor child, had studied well;
The shell of a green turtle, thin
And hollow ; you might sit therein,
It was so wide and deep.

'Twas even the largest of its kind,
Large, thin, and light, as birch-tree rind,
So light a shell that it would swim,
And gaily lift its fearless brim
Above the tossing surge.

And this the little blind boy knew:
And he a story strange, yet true,
Had heard, how in a shell like this
An English boy, oh thought of bliss !
Had stoutly launch'd from shore ;

Launch'd from the margin of a bay
Among the Indian isles, where lay
His father's ship, and had sail'd far
To join that gallant ship of war,
In his delightful shell.

Our Highland boy oft visited
The house which held this prize; and, led

By choice or chance, did thither come,
One day, when no one was at home,
And found the door unbarr'd.

While there he sat, alone and blind,
That story flash'd upon his mind,—
A bold thought roused him, and he took
The shell from out its secret nook,
And bore it in his arms.

And with the happy burthen hied,
And push'd it from Loch Leven's side,—
Stepp'd into it; and, without dread,
Following the fancies in his head,
He paddled up and down.

A while he stood upon his feet;
He felt the motion—took his seat;
And dallied thus, till from the shore
The tide retreating more and more
Had suck'd, and suck'd him in.

And there he is, in face of heaven,—
How rapidly the child is driven!
The fourth part of a mile I ween
He thus had gone, ere he was seen
By any human eye.

But when he was first seen, oh me,
What shrieking and what misery!
For many saw: among the rest
His mother, she who loved him best,
She saw her poor blind boy.

But for the child, the sightless boy,
It is the triumph of his joy!
The bravest traveller in balloon,
Mounting as if to reach the moon,
Was never half so bless'd.

And let him, let him go his way,
Alone, and innocent, and gay!
For, if good angels love to wait
On the forlorn unfortunate,
This child will take no harm.

But now the passionate lament,
Which from the crowd on shore was sent,
The cries which broke from old and young
In Gaelic, or the English tongue,
Are stifled—all is still.

And quickly, with a silent crew,
A boat is ready to pursue;

And from the shore their course they take,
And swiftly down the running lake
They follow the blind boy.

But soon they move with softer pace;
So have ye seen the fowler chase,
O'er Grasmere's clear unruffled breast,
A youngling of the wild duck's nest,
With deftly lifted oar.

Or, as the wily sailors crept
To seize (while on the deep it slept)
The hapless creature which did dwell,
Erewhile, within the dancing shell,
They steal upon their prey.

With sound the least that can be made
They follow, more and more afraid,
More cautious as they draw more near;
But in his darkness he can hear,
And guesses their intent.

"*Lei-gha—Lei-gha!*"—then did he cry,
"*Lei-gha—Lei-gha!*"—most eagerly;
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray,
And what he meant was, "Keep away,
And leave me to myself!"

Alas! and when he felt their hands—
You've often heard of magic wands,
That with a motion overthrow
A palace of the proudest show,
Or melt it into air.

So all his dreams, that inward light
With which his soul had shone so bright,
All vanish'd;—'twas a heartfelt cross
To him, a heavy, bitter loss,
As he had ever known.

But hark! a gratulating voice
With which the very hills rejoice:
'Tis from the crowd, who, tremblingly,
Had watch'd the event, and now can see
That he is safe at last.

And then, when he was brought to land,
Full sure they were a happy band,
Which, gathering round, did on the banks
Of that great water give God thanks,
And welcomed the poor child.

And in the general joy of heart
The blind boy's little dog took part;

He leapt about, and oft did kiss
His master's hands in sign of bliss,
With sound like lamentation.

But most of all, his mother dear,
She who had fainted with her fear,
Rejoiced when, waking, she espies
The child; when she can trust her eyes,
And touches the blind boy.

She led him home, and wept amain,
When he was in the house again:
Tears flow'd in torrents from her eyes;
She could not blame him or chastise:
She was too happy far.

Thus, after he had fondly braved
The perilous deep, the boy was saved:
And, though his fancies had been wild,
Yet he was pleased and reconciled
To live in peace on shore.

And in the lonely Highland dell
Still do they keep the turtle shell;
And long the story will repeat
Of the blind boy's adventurous feat,
And how he was preserved.

JUVENILE PIECES.

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED UPON LEAVING SCHOOL.

DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps shall tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look, alone on you.

Thus, when the sun, prepared for rest,
Hath gain'd the precincts of the west,
Though his departing radiance fail
To illuminate the hollow vale,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

AN EVENING WALK.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

General Sketch of the Lakes—Author's Regret of his Youth which was passed amongst them—Short description of Noon—Cascade—Noon-tide Retreat—Precipice and sloping Lights—Face of Nature as the Sun declines—Mountain Farm, and the Cock—Slate-quarry—Sunset—Superstition of the Country connected with that moment—Swans—Female Beggar—Twilight Sounds—Western Lights—Spirits—Night—Moonlight—Hope—Night Sounds—Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest friend, 'tis mine to rove
Through bare gray dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
His wizard course where hoary Derwent takes,
Through crags and forest glooms and opening lakes,
Staying his silent waves, to hear the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads;

Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds;
Where bosom'd deep, the shy Winander * peeps
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes, erewhile I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild;
Then did no ebb of cheerfulness demand
Sad tides of joy from Melancholy's hand,
In youth's wild eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,
Alike when first the vales the bittern fills,
Or the first woodcocks † roam'd the moonlight hills.

In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then, even then, the little heart would beat
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, show'd,
Where, tipp'd with gold, the mountain summits glow'd.
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
With hope Reflection blends her social rays,
To gild the total tablet of his days:
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
To shew her yet some joys to me remain,
Say will my friend, with soft affection's ear,
The history of a poet's evening hear?

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between;
Gazing the tempting shades to them denied,
When stood the shorten'd herds amid the tide,
Where from the barren wall's unshelter'd end
Long rails into the shallow lake extend.
When school-boys stretch'd their length upon the green;
And round the humming elm, a glimmering scene,
In the brown park, in flocks the troubled deer
Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing ear;
When horses in the wall-girt intake ‡ stood,
Unshaded, eyeing far below the flood,

* These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.
† In the beginning of winter, these mountains are frequented by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.
‡ The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain inclosure.

Crowded behind the swain, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press—
Then, as I wander'd where the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks, the hollow ghyll,*
To where, while thick above the branches close,
In dark brown basin its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between,
Save that aloft the subtile sunbeams shine
On wither'd briers that o'er the crags recline;
Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade!
Beyond, along the vista of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling path o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge,†
Half gray, half snagg'd with ivy to its ridge.

Sweet rill, farewell! To-morrow's noon again
Shall hide me, wooing long thy wildwood strain;
But now the sun has gain'd his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silver'd kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Slant watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
Travel along the precipice's base;
Cheering its naked waste of scatter'd stone,
By lichens gray and scanty moss o'ergrown;
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or thistle's beard;
And restless stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

How pleasant, as the yellowing sun declines,
And with long rays and shades the landscape shines;
To mark the birches' stems all golden light,
That lit the dark slant woods with silvery white;
The willow's weeping trees, that twinkling hoar,
Glanced oft upturn'd along the breezy shore,
Low bending o'er the colour'd water, fold
Their moveless boughs and leaves like threads of gold;
The skiffs with naked masts at anchor laid,
Before the boat-house peeping through the shade;
The unwearied glance of woodman's echo'd stroke;
And curling from the trees the cottage smoke.

Their pannier'd train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road;

* Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country: ghyll and dingle have the same meaning.

† The reader who has made the tour of this country, will recognise, in this description, the features which characterise the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydal.

The peasant from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge;
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illume,
Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings,"* and broom;
While the sharp slope the slacken'd team confounds,
Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds;
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
Dash'd down the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
Sounds from the water-side the hammer'd boat;
And *blasted* quarry thunders heard remote!

Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the glassy door of mountain farms.

Sweetly ferocious,† round his native walks,
Pride of his sister wives, the monarch stalks;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
A crest of purple tops his warrior head
Bright sparks his black and rolling eyeball hurls
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
On tiptoe rear'd, he strains his clarion throat,
Threaten'd by faintly answering farms remote.

Bright'ning the cliffs between, where sombrous pine
And yew-trees o'er the silver rocks recline;
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf pannier'd steeds, and men, and numerous wains:
How busy the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with the various din!
Some (hardly heard their chisels' clinking sound)
Toil, small as pigmies in the gulf profound;
Some, dim between th' aërial clifts descried,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to side;
These, by the pale blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
Glad from their airy baskets hang and sing.

Hung o'er a cloud above the steep that rears
Its edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
And now it touches on the purple steep
That flings his shadow on the pictured deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a "prospect all on fire;"

* "Vivid rings of green."—*Greenwood's Poem on Shooting.*

† "Dolcemente feroce."—*Tasso.* In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in "L'Agriculture, ou Les Géorgiques Françaises," of M. Rossuet.

The coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
The gilded turf arrays in richer green
Each speck of lawn the broken rocks between,
Deep yellow beams the scatter'd boles illume,
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, in the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
That barking, busy 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks.
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth wild weeds and twisted roots;
The Druid-stones their lighted fane unfold,
And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops behind the hill.*

In these lone vales, if aught of faith may claim
Their silver hairs and ancient hamlet fame,
When up the hills, as now, retreats the light,
Strange apparitions mock the village sight.

A desperate form appears that spurs his steed
Along the midway cliffs with violent speed;
Unhurt pursues his lengthen'd flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, in order mounts, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;
And now the van is gilt with evening's beam;
The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam,
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Lost gradual o'er the heights in pomp they go,
Till, but the lonely beacon, all is fled
That tips with eve's latest gleam his spiry head.

Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On red slow-waving pinions, down the vale;
How pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray
Where winds the road along a secret bay,
In all the majesty of ease divides,
And glorying looks around the silent tides;
Along the "wild meandering shore" to view,
Obsequious grace the winding swan pursue;
He swells his lifted chest and backward flings
His bridling neck between his towering wings;
By rills that tumble down the woody steeps,
And run in transports to the dimpling deeps;
On as he floats, the silver'd waters glow,
Proud of the varying arch and moveless form of snow,

* From Thomson.

While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water-lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgets, unwearied watching every side;
She calls them near, and with affection sweet
Alternately relieves their weary feet.
Alternately they mount her back, and rest,
Close by her mantling wings' embraces press'd.

Long may they roam these hermit waves, that sleep
In birch-besprinkled cliffs embosom'd deep,
These fairy holms untrodden, still, and green,
Whose shades protect the hidden wave serene,
Whence fragrance scents the water's desert gale,
The violet and lily of the vale!
Where, though her far-off twilight ditty steal,
They not the trip of harmless milkmaid feel;
Yon tuft conceals their home, their cottage bower;
Fresh water-rushes strew the verdant floor;
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
Thence issuing oft unwieldy as they stalk,
They crush with broad black feet their flowery walk;
Safe from your door ye hear at breezy morn
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn;
No ruder sound your desert haunts invades
Than waters dashing wild, or rocking shades;
Ye ne'er, like hapless human wanderers, throw
Your young on winter's winding-sheet of snow.

Fair swan! by all a mother's joys caress'd,
Haply some wretch has eyed, and call'd thee bless'd;
I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to a shooting star on high.
—When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the public road,
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
Oft has she taught them on her lap to play
Delighted with the glow-worm's harmless ray,
Toss light from hand to hand, while on the ground
Small circles of green radiance gleam around.

Oh! when the bitter showers her path assail,
And roars between the hills the torrent gale,

No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;
Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield!
Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, coffin'd in thine arms!

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn colouring of the night;
'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their shadows throw,
Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray;
Shedding, through paly loopholes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall;
Beyond the mountain's giant reach that hides
In deep determined gloom his subject tides;
Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale,
Tracking the fitful motions of the gale.
With restless interchange at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favour'd eye was e'er allow'd to gaze
On lovlier spectacle in fairy days;
When gentle spirits urged a sportive chase,
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face;
While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charm'd the tall circle of th' enchanted steeps.
—The lights are vanish'd from the watery plains:
No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales:
On the dark earth the baffled vision fails;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke no more,
Lost in the thicken'd darkness, glimmers hoar;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain-steeps appear.
—Now o'er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,

And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay!
Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away:
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

The bird, who ceased with fading light to thread
Silent the hedge or steaming rivulet's bed,
From his gray reappearing tower shall soon
Salute with boding note the rising moon,
Frosting with hoary light the pearly ground,
And pouring deeper blue to ether's bound;
And pleased her solemn pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.

See o'er the eastern hill, where darkness broods
O'er all its vanish'd dells, and lawns, and woods,
Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
She lifts in silence up her lovely face;
Above the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white;
And gives, where woods the chequer'd upland strew,
To the green corn of summer, autumn's hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon's own morn,
Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near;
Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.

Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between),
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way;
How fair its lawns and sheltering woods appear!
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear!)
Where we, my friend, to happy days shall rise,
Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hush'd into the tranquil breast of death.

But now the clear bright moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains:
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;
From the dark blue faint silvery threads divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide;
The scene is waken'd, yet its peace unbroke
By silver'd wreaths of quiet charcoal smoke,

That o'er the ruins of the fallen wood,
Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.
All air is like the sleeping water, still,
List'ning the aërial music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferryman from sleep,
The echoed hoof approaching the far shore,
Soon follow'd by his hollow parting oar;
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the feeding hare through rustling corn;
The tremulous sob of the complaining owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES;

TAKEN DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR AMONG THE ALPS.

No sad vacuities his heart annoy;—
Blows not a zephyr but it whispers joy;
For him lost flowers their idle sweets exhale;
He tastes "the meanest note that swells the gale;"
For him sod seats the cottage-door adorn,
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the green-sward to his velvet tread:
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
Upward he looks—"and calls it luxury;"
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend;
In every babbling brook he finds a friend;
Whilst chast'ning thoughts of sweetest use, bestow'd
By wisdom, moralise his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noontide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive, like Memnon's * lyre;
Blesses the moon that comes with kindest ray
To light him shaken by his viewless way;
With bashful fear no cottage children steal
From him, a brother at the cottage meal;
His humble looks no shy restraint impart,
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.

* The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with inquiring glance,
Much wondering what sad stroke of crazing care
Or desperate love could lead a wanderer there.

I sigh at hoary Chartreuse' doom,
Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
Tamed "sober Reason" till she crouch'd in fear?
That breathed a death-like peace around these woods.

* * * * *

The cloister startles at the gleam of arms,
And blasphemy the shuddering fane alarms;
Nod the cloud-piercing pines their troubled heads:
Spires, rocks, and lawns, a browner night o'erspreads.
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonish'd shades at female eyes.
And thundering tube the aged angler hears,
And swells the groaning torrent with his tears.
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
The cross,* with hideous laughter demons mock,
By angels planted on the aërial rock:
The "parting genius" sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death.†
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,
Vallombre,‡ 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the Sabbath of her bowers.

More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosom'd deep in chestnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
To towns, whose shades of no rude sound complain,
To ringing team unknown and grating wain,
To flat-roof'd towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whiten'd wave their shadows fling;
Wild round the steeps the little pathway twines,
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The viewless lingerer, hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades,

* Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.
† Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.
‡ Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse

Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad and blue,
Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills with tortoise foot they creep,
Here, half a village shines, in gold array'd,
Bright as the moon, half hides itself in shade.
From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire,
Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire.
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the waves below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How bless'd, delicious scene! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties or thy lone retreats;
The unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales;
The never-ending waters of thy vales;
The cots, those dim religious groves embower,
Or, under rocks that from the water tower
Insinuated, sprinkling all the shore;
Each with his household boat beside the door,
Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
Brightening the gloom where thick the forests stoop;
—Thy torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
Thy towns, like swallows' nests that cleave on high,
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried,
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods,
While evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,
Heard, by star-spotted bays, beneath the steeps;
—Thy lake, 'mid smoking woods, that blue and gray
Gleams, streak'd or dappled, hid from morning's ray,
Slow travelling down the western hills, to fold
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold;
From thickly-glittering spires, the matin bell
Calling the woodman from his desert cell,
A summons to the sound of oars, that pass,
Spotting the steaming deeps, to early mass;
Slow swells the service, o'er the water borne,
While fill each pause the ringing woods of morn.

Now, passing Urseren's open vale serene,
Her quiet streams and hills of downy green,
Plunge with the Russ embrown'd by Terror's breath,
Where danger roofs the narrow walks of death;
By floods, that, thundering from their dizzy height,
Swell more gigantic on the steadfast sight;

Black drizzling crags, that, beaten by the din,
Vibrate as if a voice complain'd within;
Bare steeps where Desolation stalks, afraid,
Unsteadfast, by a blasted yew upstay'd;
By cells * whose image, trembling as he prays,
Awe-struck, the kneeling peasant scarce surveys;
Loose-hanging rocks the day's bless'd eye that hide,
And crosses † rear'd to Death on every side,
Which with cold kiss Devotion planted near,
And, bending, water'd with the human tear,
That faded "silent" from her upward eye,
Unmoved with each rude form of danger nigh,
Fix'd on the anchor left by him who saves
Alike in whelming snows and roaring waves.

On as we move, a softer prospect opes—
Calm huts, and lawns between, and sylvan slopes;
While mists, suspended on th' expiring gale,
Moveless o'erhang the deep secluded vale,
The beams of evening, slipping soft between,
Light up of tranquil joy a sober scene;
Winding its dark-green wood and emerald glade,
The still vale lengthens underneath the shade;
While in soft gloom the scattering bowers recede,
Green dewy lights adorn the freshen'd mead,
On the low ‡ brown wood-huts delighted sleep
Along the brighten'd gloom reposing deep.
While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through drizzling showers.

From such romantic dreams my soul awake,
Lo! Fear looks silent down on Uri's lake,
Where, by the unpathway'd margin, still and dread,
Was never heard the plodding peasant's tread.
Tower like a wall the naked rocks, or reach
Far o'er the secret water dark with beech;
More high, to where creation seems to end,
Shade above shade, the desert pines ascend,
Yet with his infants, man undaunted creeps,
And hangs his small wood hut upon the steeps.

* The Catholic religion prevails here; these cells are, as is well known, very common in Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the roadside.

† Crosses commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow and other accidents, very common along this dreadful road.

‡ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

Where'er below, amid the savage scene,
Peeps out a little speck of smiling green.
A garden plot the mountain air perfumes,
'Mid the dark pines a little orchard blooms,
A zig-zag path from the domestic skiff,
Threading the painful crag, surmounts the cliff.
Before those hermit doors, that never know
The face of traveller passing to and fro,
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning toll'd the funeral bell;
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark foregoes,
Touch'd by the beggar's moan of human woes;
The grassy seat beneath their casement shade
The pilgrim's wistful eye hath never stay'd.
There did the iron genius not disdain
The gentle power that haunts the myrtle plain,
There might the love-sick maiden sit, and chide
The insuperable rocks and severing tide;
There watch at eve her lover's sun-gilt sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale;
There list at midnight, till is heard no more,
Below, the echo of his parting oar;
There hang in fear, when growls the frozen stream,
To guide his dangerous tread, the taper's gleam.

'Mid stormy vapours ever driving by,
Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons cry,
Where hardly given the hopeless waste to cheer,
Denied the bread of life, the foodful ear,
Dwindles the pear on autumn's latest spray,
And apple sickens pale in summer's ray;
Even here Content has fixed her smiling reign
With Independence, child of high Disdain.
Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And often grasps her sword, and often eyes:
Her crest a bough of winter's bleakest pine,
Strange "weeds" and Alpine plants her helm entwine,
And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
While thrills the "Spartan fife," between the blast.

'Tis storm; and, hid in mist from hour to hour,
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour;
The sky is veil'd, and every cheerful sight:
Dark is the region as with coming night;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light;
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form;
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake recline;

Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold;
Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
The west, that burns like one dilated sun,
Where, in a mighty crucible, expire
The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.
And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought * but the herds that, pasturing, upward creep,
Hung dim-discover'd from the dangerous steep,
Or summer hamlet, flat and bare, on high
Suspended, 'mid the quiet of the sky.
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight;
An idle voice the Sabbath region fills
Of deep that calls to deep across the hills.
Broke only by the melancholy sound
Of drowsy bells for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods' steady *sough*; †
The solitary heifer's deepen'd low;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow;
Save that, the stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

When warm from myrtle bays and tranquil seas,
Comes on, to whisper hope, the vernal breeze,
When hums the mountain bee in May's glad ear,
And emerald isles to spot the heights appear,
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noontide hill,
When fragrant scents beneath the enchanted tread
Spring up, his choicest wealth around him spread,
The pastoral Swiss begins the cliffs to scale,
To silence leaving the deserted vale,
Mounts where the verdure leads, from stage to stage,
And pastures on, as in the patriarchs' age:
O'er lofty heights serene and still they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below.
They cross the chasmy torrent's foam-lit bed,
Rock'd on the dizzy larch's narrow tread;
Or steal beneath loose mountains, half deterr'd,
That sigh and shudder to the lowing herd.
—I see him, up the midway cliff he creeps
To where a scanty knot of verdure peeps;
Thence down the steep a pile of grass he throws,
The fodder of his herds in winter snows.

* This picture is from the middle region of the Alps.
† "Sough," a Scotch word, expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

Far different life to what tradition hoar
Transmits of days more blest in times of yore :
Then summer lengthen'd out his season bland,
And with rock-honey flow'd the happy land.
Continual fountains welling cheer'd the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste.
Nor winter yet his frozen stores had piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled;
Nor hunger forced the herds from pastures bare,
For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to dare.
Then the milk-thistle bade those herds demand
Three times a day the pail and welcome hand.
But human vices have provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Thus does the father to his sons relate,
On the lone mountain-top, their changed estate.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.
When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows;
That hut which from the hills his eyes employs
So oft, the central point of all his joys.
Where, safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears winter, calling all his terrors round,
Rush down the living rocks with whirlwind sound.
Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide,
Unstain'd by envy, discontent, and pride,
The bound of all his vanity to deck,
With one bright bell a favourite heifer's neck;
Content upon some simple annual feast,
Remember'd half the year and hoped the rest,
Of dairy produce, from his inner hoard
Of thrice ten summers consecrate the board.

Gay lark of hope, thy silent song resume!
Fair smiling lights the purpled hills illume!
Soft gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!
Soon flies the little joy to man allow'd,
And grief before him travels like a cloud:
For come diseases on and penury's rage,
Labour, and care, and pain, and dismal age,
Till, hope-deserted, long in vain his breath
Implores the dreadful untried sleep of death.
—'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine
Between interminable tracts of pine,
A temple stands; which holds an awful shrine,
By an uncertain light reveal'd, that falls

On the mute image and the troubled walls:
Pale, dreadful faces round the shrine appear,
Abortive joy, and hope that works in fear;
While strives a secret power to hush the crowd,
Pain's wild rebellious burst proclaims her rights aloud.

Oh! give me not that eye of hard disdain
That views undimm'd Ensiedlen's * wretched fane.
'Mid muttering prayers all sounds of torment meet,
Dire clap of hands, distracted chafe of feet;
While loud and dull ascends the weeping cry,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope—oh, pass and leave it there.

THE FEMALE VAGRANT.

My father was a good and pious man,
An honest man by honest parents bred;
And I believe, that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said;
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
Ah! little mark'd how fast they roll'd away;
Then rose a stately hall our woods among,
And cottage after cottage own'd its sway.
No joy to see a neighbouring house, or stray
Through pastures not his own, the master took:
My father dared his greedy wish gainsay;
He loved his old hereditary nook,
And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.

But when he had refused the proffer'd gold,
To cruel injuries he became a prey,
Sore traversed in whate'er he bought and sold:
His troubles grew upon him day by day,
And all his substance fell into decay.
They dealt most hardly with him, and he tried
To move their hearts—but it was vain—for they
Seized all he had; and, weeping side by side,
We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.

It was in truth a lamentable hour
When, from the last hill-top my sire survey'd,

* This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage-day sweet music made.
Till then he hoped his bones might there be laid,
Close by my mother, in their native bowers;
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and pray'd—
I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers,
I saw our own dear home, that was no longer ours.

There was a youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say.
'Mid the green mountains many and many a song
We two had sung, like gladsome birds in May.
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seem'd still more and more to prize each other;
We talk'd of marriage and our marriage-day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother;
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

Two years were pass'd, since to a distant town
He had repair'd to ply the artist's trade.
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown—
What tender vows our last sad kiss delay'd!
To him we turn'd: we had no other aid.
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept:
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said
He well could love in grief: his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

We lived in peace and comfort; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.
Three lovely infants lay upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sigh'd,
And knew not why. My happy father died
When sad distress reduced the children's meal;
Thrice happy! that from him the grave did hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flow'd for ills which patience could not heal.

'Twas a hard change—an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain.
But soon, day after day, the noisy drum
Beat round to sweep the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view:
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew:
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more we drew.

There, long were we neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weigh'd;
Green fields before us and our native shore,
We breathed a pestilential air that made

Ravage for which no knell was heard. We pray'd
For our departure; wish'd and wish'd—nor knew
'Mid that long sickness, and those hopes delay'd,
That happier days we never more must view:
The parting signal stream'd, at last the land withdrew.

But the calm summer season now was past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains high before the howling blast;
And many perish'd in the whirlwind's sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue.
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue.
We reach'd the Western World, a poor, devoted crew.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would thy brain unsettle, even to hear.
All perish'd—all, in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perish'd: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.

Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
By the first beams of dawning light impress'd,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main:
The very ocean has its hour of rest.
I too was calm, though heavily distress'd!
Oh me, how quiet sky and ocean were!
My heart was hush'd within me, I was bless'd,
And look'd, and look'd along the silent air,
Until it seem'd to bring a joy to my despair.

Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps!
And groans, that rage of racking famine spoke:
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps!
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke;
The shriek that from the distant battle broke!
The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host,
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where, heart-sick, anguish-toss'd,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

At midnight once the storming army came,—
Yet do I see the miserable sight,
The bayonet, the soldier, and the flame
That follow'd us and traced us in our flight;
When rape and murder by the ghastly light

Seized their joint prey, the mother and the child!
But I must leave these thoughts.—From night to night,
From day to day, the air breathed soft and mild;
And on the gliding vessel Heaven and ocean smiled.

Some mighty gulf of separation past,
I seem'd transported to another world:—
A thought resign'd with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurl'd,
And whistling, call'd the wind that hardly curl'd
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home,
And from all hope I was for ever hurl'd.
For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.

And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I at last a resting-place had found;
Here will I dwell, said I, my whole life long,
Roaming the illimitable waters round:
Here will I live—of every friend disown'd,
And end my days upon the ocean flood.—
To break my dream the vessel reach'd its bound:
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.

By grief enfeebled was I turn'd adrift,
Helpless as sailor cast on desert rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor dared my hand at any door to knock.
I lay where with his drowsy mates the cock
From the cross-timber of an out-house hung;
Dismally toll'd, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I frame my tongue.

So pass'd another day, and so the third;
Then did I try in vain the crowd's resort.
—In deep despair by frightful wishes stirr'd,
Near the sea-side I reach'd a ruin'd fort:
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness link'd, did on my vitals fall,
And I had many interruptions short
Of hideous sense; I sank, nor step could crawl,
And thence was carried to a neighbouring hospital.

Recovery came with food; but still my brain
Was weak, nor of the past had memory.
I heard my neighbours, in their beds, complain
Of many things which never troubled me:
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee;
Of looks where common kindness had no part;
Of service done with careless cruelty,

Fretting the fever round the languid heart;
And groans, which, as they said, might make a dead man start.

These things just served to stir the torpid sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
My memory and my strength return'd; and thence
Dismiss'd, again on open day I gazed
At houses, men, and common light, amazed,
The lanes I sought, and as the sun retired,
Came, where beneath the trees a fagot blazed;
The travellers saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food, and rest, more welcome, more desired.

My heart is touch'd to think that men like these,
Wild, houseless wanderers, were my first relief:
How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
And their long holiday that fear'd not grief!
For all belong'd to all, and each was chief.
No plough their sinews strain'd; on grating road
No wain they drove; and yet the yellow sheaf
In every vale for their delight was stow'd;
In every field, with milk their dairy overflow'd.

They with their pannier'd asses semblance made
Of potters wandering on from door to door:
But life of happier sort to me portray'd,
And other joys my fancy to allure;
The bagpipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted, and companions boon
Well met from far, with revelry secure,
Among the forest glades, when jocund June
Roll'd fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

But ill they suited me; those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch!
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tip-toe at the lifted latch;
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill:
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Ill was I then for toil or service fit:
With tears whose course no effort could confine,
By the road-side forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, my idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

I led a wandering life among the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
I lived upon what casual bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used:
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
Is, that I have my inner self abused,
Forgone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

Three years thus wandering, often have I view'd,
In tears, the sun towards that country tend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
And now across this moor my steps I bend—
Oh! tell me whither——for no earthly friend
Have I.——She ceased, and weeping turn'd away.
As if because her tale was at an end
She wept; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS.

THE BROTHERS.*

"THESE tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as wise,
Upon the forehead of a jutting crag
Sit perch'd, with book and pencil on their knee,
And look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But for that moping son of idleness—
Why can he tarry *yonder*?—In our churchyard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves." To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening; and he sate
Upon the long stone seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage,—as it chanced, that day,
Employ'd in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sat near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards, tooth'd with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who turn'd her large round wheel in the open air
With back and forward steps. Towards the field
In which the parish chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder; and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled,
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other lock'd; and down the path
Which from his cottage to the churchyard led,

* This poem was intended to conclude a series of pastorals, the scene of which was laid among the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland. I mention this to apologise for the abruptness with which the poem begins.

He took his way, impatient to accost
The stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A shepherd-lad;—who ere his sixteenth year,
Had left that calling, tempted to intrust
His expectations to the fickle winds
And perilous waters,—with the mariners
A fellow-mariner,—and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been rear'd
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees:—and when the regular wind
Between the tropics fill'd the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless main, he in those hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam
Flash'd round him images and hues that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him in the bosom of the deep,
Saw mountains,—saw the forms of sheep that grazed
On verdant hills—with dwellings among trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country gray
Which he himself had worn. *

And now at last
From perils manifold, with some small wealth,
Acquired by traffic in the Indian isles,
To his parental home he is return'd,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life which he lived there; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother shepherds on their native hills.
—They were the last of all their race: and now,
When Leonard had approach'd his home, his heart
Fail'd in him; and, not venturing to inquire
Tidings of one whom he so dearly loved,
Towards the churchyard he had turn'd aside,—

* This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr Gilbert, author of "The Hurricane."

That as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added. He had found
Another grave,—near which a full half-hour
He had remain'd: but as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt; and he had hopes
That he had seen this heap of turf before,—
That it was not another grave; but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walk'd
Through fields which once had been well known to him:
And oh! what joy the recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
And looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And the eternal hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come
Unseen by Leonard, at the churchyard gate
Stopp'd short,—and thence, at leisure, limb by limb,
Perused him with a gay complacency.
Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheeks, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write fool upon his forehead. Planted thus
Beneath a shed that over-arch'd the gate
Of this rude churchyard, till the stars appear'd,
The good man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approach'd; he recognised the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar, as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued:—

LEONARD.

You live, sir, in these dales a quiet life:
Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remember'd? Scarce a funeral
Comes to this churchyard once in eighteen months;
And yet some changes must take place among you:

And you who dwell here, even among these rocks
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten,
We are not all that perish.——I remember,
For many years ago I pass'd this road,
There was a footway all along the fields
By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had.

PRIEST.

Nay, sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—

LEONARD.

But, surely, yonder—

PRIEST.

Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false.—On that tall pike
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two springs which bubbled side by side,
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: ten years back,
Close to those brother fountains, the huge crag
Was rent with lightning,—one is dead and gone,
The other, left behind, is flowing still.*——
For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them!—a waterspout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract:—a sharp May storm,
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge—
A wood is fell'd:—and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christen'd, a field plough'd,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house clock is deck'd with a new face;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries,—one serving, sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fireside—
Yours was a stranger's judgment: for historians,
Commend me to these valleys!

* This actually took place upon Kidstow Pike at the head of Hawes Water.

LEONARD.

Yet your churchyard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past;
An orphan could not find his mother's grave:
Here' s neither head nor foot stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones or skull,—type of our earthly state
Or emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture field.

PRIEST.

Why, there, sir, is a thought that 's new to me!
The stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English churchyard were like ours;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth:
We have no need of names and epitaphs;
We talk about the dead by our firesides.
And then, for our immortal part; *we* want
No symbols, sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

LEONARD.

Your dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?

PRIEST.

For eight-score winters past,
With what I 've witness'd, and with what I 've heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter's evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there 's a grave—your foot is half upon it,—
It looks just like the rest; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

LEONARD.

'Tis a common case.
We 'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the churchyard wall.

PRIEST.

That 's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age

Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflow'd the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage—
You see it yonder; and those few green fields.
They toil'd and wrought, and still from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little—yet a little—and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind,—and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurr'd him,
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him:—but you,
Unless our landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel,—and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer——

LEONARD.

But those two orphans——

PRIEST.

Orphans!—Such they were—
Yet not while Walter lived:—for though their parents
Lay buried side by side, as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talk'd of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
Ay—you may turn that way—it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

LEONARD.

These boys—I hope
They loved this good old man?—

PRIEST.

They did—and truly:
But that was what we almost overlook'd,
They were such darlings of each other. For

Though from their cradles they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to them by reason of his age
With a more fond, familiar tenderness,
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them!—From their house the school
Was distant three short miles—and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every watercourse
And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys perhaps
Remain'd at home, go staggering through the fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I 've seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Ay, more than once I 've seen him mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone
Upon the hither side: and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety—

LEONARD.

It may be then—

PRIEST.

Never did worthier lads break English bread;
The finest Sunday that the autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep these boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of Sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
Where foot could come, to one or both of them
Was known as well as to the flowers that grew there.
Like roebucks they went bounding o'er the hills:
They play'd like two young ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, ay, and speak too, as well
As many of their betters—and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I 'd wager twenty pounds,
That, if he is alive, he has it yet.

LEONARD.

It seems these brothers have not lived to be
A comfort to each other.—

W. Small.
J. Bastard Sc.

PRIEST.

That they might
Live to such end is what both old and young,
In this our valley, all of us, have wish'd,
And what, for my part, I have often pray'd:
But Leonard—

LEONARD.

Then James still is left among you?

PRIEST.

'Tis of the elder brother I am speaking:
They had an uncle;—he was at that time
A thriving man, and traffick'd on the seas:
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud.
For the boy loved the life which we lead here
And, though of unripe years, a stripling only,
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The estate and house were sold; and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years:—
Well—all was gone, and they were destitute;
And Leonard, chiefly for his brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
'Tis now twelve years since we had tidings from him.
If there was one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel,* down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a very festival;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see—
Hanging in the open air—but, O good sir!
This is sad talk—they 'll never sound for him—
Living or dead.—When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast.—'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the youth
Was sadly cross'd.—Poor Leonard! when we parted,
He took me by the hand and said to me,
If ever the day came when he was rich,

* The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale. The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

He would return, and on his father's land
He would grow old among us.

LEONARD.

If that day
Should come, 'twould needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him—

PRIEST.

Happy! Sir—

LEONARD.

You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one brother—

PRIEST.

That is but
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side,
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain boy
In him was somewhat check'd; and when his brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he droop'd, and pined, and pined—

LEONARD.

But these are all the graves of full-grown men!

PRIEST.

Ay, sir, that pass'd away: we took him to us;
He was the child of all the dale—he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another;
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love:
And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
His absent brother still was at his heart.
And when he lived beneath our roof, we found
(A practice till this time unknown to him)
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
He sought his brother Leonard.—You are moved!
Forgive me, sir—before I spoke to you,
I judged you most unkindly.

LEONARD.

But this youth,
How did he die at last?

PRIEST.

One sweet May morning
(It will be twelve years since when spring returns)
He had gone forth among the new-dropp'd lambs,
With two or three companions, whom it chanced
Some further business summon'd to a house
Which stands at the dale-head. James, tired, perhaps,
Or from some other cause, remain'd behind.
You see yon precipice; it almost looks
Like some vast building made of many crags;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is call'd THE PILLAR.
James pointed to its summit, over which
They all had purposed to return together,
And told them that he there would wait for them:
They parted, and his comrades pass'd that way
Some two hours after, but they did not find him
Upon the summit—at the appointed place.
Of this they took no heed: but one of them,
Going by chance, at night, into the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learn'd
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarm'd, and to the brook
Some went, and some towards the lake: ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same rock—
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after,
I buried him, poor youth, and there he lies!

LEONARD.

And that then *is* his grave? Before his death
You said that he saw many happy years?

PRIEST.

Ay, that he did—

LEONARD.

And all went well with him?—

PRIEST.

If he had one, the youth had twenty homes.

LEONARD.

And you believe, then, that his mind was easy?—

PRIEST.

Yes, long before he died he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow; and unless
His thoughts were turn'd on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talk'd about him with a cheerful love.

LEONARD.

He could not come to an unhallow'd end!

PRIEST.

Nay, God forbid!—You recollect I mention'd
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
Upon the grass, and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep; that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walk'd, and from the summit had fallen headlong;
And so no doubt he perish'd: at the time,
We guess, that in his hands he must have had
His shepherd's staff; for midway in the cliff
It had been caught; and there for many years
It hung—and moulder'd there.

The Priest here ended.
The stranger would have thank'd him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
And Leonard, when they reach'd the churchyard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turn'd round,—
And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother!"
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
Pointing towards the cottage, he entreated
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thank'd him with a fervent voice;
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.
It was not long ere Leonard reach'd a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopp'd short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, review'd
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him in his heart—his cherish'd hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All press'd on him with such a weight, that now
This vale, where he had been so happy, seem'd
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquish'd all his purposes.
He travell'd on to Egremont: and thence,
That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had pass'd between them;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.

This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A seaman, a gray-headed mariner.

THE SPARROW'S NEST.

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright-blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discover'd sight
Gleam'd like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy
The home and shelter'd bed,—
The sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My father's house, in wet or dry,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She look'd at it as if she fear'd it;
Still wishing, dreading to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little prattler among men.
The blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

I've watch'd you now a full half-hour
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little butterfly, indeed,
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas
More motionless; and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard ground is ours;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days when we were young—
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

A FAREWELL.*

FAREWELL, thou little nook of mountain ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell!—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchor'd by the shore,
And safely she will ride when we are gone;
The flowering shrubs that decorate our door
Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none;
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes and sun doth shine upon,
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!
For two months now in vain we shall be sought;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!
Whom from the borders of the lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky well.

We go for one to whom you will be dear;
And she will prize this bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, building without peer!
A gentle maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
She 'll come to you,—to you herself will wed,—
And love the blessed life which we lead here.

Dear spot! which we have watch'd with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness register'd and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show

* Composed in the year 1802.

To them who look not daily in thy face;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And say'st when we forsake thee, "Let them go!"
Thou easy-hearted thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring the best beloved and best.
Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, throng'd with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glitter'd at evening like a starry sky;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sung one song that will not die.

O happy garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET COPY OF THOMSON'S "CASTLE OF INDOLENCE."

WITHIN our happy castle there dwelt one
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
Here on his hours he hung as on a book;
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow—or belike to-day—
Seek for him,—he is fled; and whither none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbouring height:
Oft did we see him driving full in view,
At mid-day, when the sun was shining bright;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this man
When he came back to us, a wither'd flower,
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit; and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him wrong:
But verse was what he had been wedded to;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary wight along.

With him there often walk'd in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable man with large gray eyes,
And a pale face that seem'd undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Depress'd by weight of musing phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
Yet some did think that he had little business here:

Sweet heaven forfend! his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight,
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.
Nor lack'd his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
And, certes, not in vain; he had inventions rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, pluck'd round him as he lay,
Made—to his ear attentively applied—
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play—
Glasses he had, that little things display,—
The beetle with his radiance manifold,
A mailèd angel on a battle-day;
And cups of flowers, and herbage green and gold;
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other man to hear
His music and to view his imagery:

And, sooth, these two did love each other dear
As far as love in such a place could be;
There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen:
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a maiden queen.

ELLEN IRWIN; OR, THE BRAES OF KIRTLE.*

Fair Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the Braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian maid
Adorn'd with wreaths of myrtle.
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay;
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many knights and many squires
The Bruce had been selected;
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble youth!
For it may be proclaim'd with truth,
If Bruce hath loved sincerely,
That Gordon loves as dearly.

But what is Gordon's beauteous face,
And what are Gordon's crosses
To them who sit by Kirtle's Braes
Upon the verdant mosses?
Alas that ever he was born!
The Gordon, couch'd behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing,
Beholds them blest and blessing.

Proud Gordon cannot bear the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,—
And, starting up, to Bruce's heart,
He launch'd a deadly javelin!
Fair Ellen saw it when it came,
And, stepping forth to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The youth, her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,

* The Kirtle is a river in the southern part of Scotland, on whose banks the events here related took place.

Thus from the heart of her true love
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sail'd away to Spain;
And fought, with rage incessant,
Against the Moorish crescent.

But many days, and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing:
And, coming back across the wave,
Without a groan on Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye, who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkonnel churchyard view
The grave of lovely Ellen:
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid;
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn HIC JACET!

STRANGE fits of passion I have known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved was strong and gay,
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening moon.

Upon the moon I fix'd my eye,
All over the wide lea:
My horse trudged on—and we drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reach'd the orchard plot;
And, as we climb'd the hill,
Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
The moon descended still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And, all the while, my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised and never stopp'd:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once the bright moon dropp'd.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a lover's head!—
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

I travell'd among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherish'd turn'd her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings shew'd, thy nights conceal'd
The bowers where Lucy play'd;
And thine is too the last green field
That Lucy's eyes survey'd.

LOUISA.

I met Louisa in the shade;
And, having seen that lovely maid,

Why should I fear to say
That she is ruddy, fleet, and strong;
And down the rocks can leap along,
Like rivulets in May?

And she hath smiles to earth unknown;
Smiles, that with motion of their own
Do spread, and sink, and rise;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes.

She loves her fire, her cottage home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that 's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook,
To hunt the waterfalls.

'Tis said that some have died for love:
And here and there a churchyard grave is found
In the cold North's unhallow'd ground,—
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side:
He loved——the pretty Barbara died,
And thus he makes his moan:
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid,
When thus his moan he made:

"Oh, move, thou cottage, from behind that oak!
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the heavens depart;
I look—the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But, when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

"Oh, what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
When will that dying murmur be suppress'd?

Your sound my heart of peace bereaves,
It robs my heart of rest.
Thou thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or choose another tree.

"Roll back, sweet rill! back to thy mountain bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chain'd!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustain'd;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb!—
Be anything, sweet rill, but that which thou art now.

"Thou eglantine, whose arch so proudly towers,
(Even like a rainbow spanning half the vale,)
Thou one fair shrub—oh, shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale!
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,—
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,—
Disturbs me, till the sight is more than I can bear."

The man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipp'd from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle love! nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, or know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.

THE COMPLAINT OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN.

(When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and, if he is unable to follow or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert, unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, "Hearne's Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean." In the high Northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the Northern Lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise. This circumstance is alluded to in the first stanzas of the following poem.)

Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars were mingled with my dreams;

In sleep did I behold the skies,
I saw the crackling flashes drive;
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive.
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain.
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wish'd to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone I cannot fear to die.

Alas! 'ye might have dragg'd me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
My friends, when ye were gone away.

My child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran;
A most strange working did I see;
As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me.
And then he stretch'd his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a helpless child.

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send!
Too soon, my friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say.

I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain,
I'll look upon your tents again.—
My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood;
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I,
Then wherefore shall I fear to die?

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK.

In distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet;
Sturdy he seem'd, though he was sad;
And in his arms a lamb he had.

He saw me, and he turn'd aside,
As if he wish'd himself to hide:
Then with his coat he made essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I follow'd him, and said, "My friend,
What ails you—wherefore weep you so?"
"Shame on me, sir! this lusty lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetch'd him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock.

"When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, a ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I number'd a full score,
And every year increased my store.

"Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As sweet a flock as ever grazed!

Upon the mountain did they feed,
They throve, and we at home did thrive.—
This lusty lamb, of all my store,
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

"Six children, sir! had I to feed;
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the parish ask'd relief.
They said I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the mountain fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
'Do this: how can we give to you,'
They cried, 'what to the poor is due?'

"I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;
For me,—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had rear'd
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away!
For me it was a woful day.

"Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother,
It was a vein that never stopp'd—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropp'd.
Till thirty were not left alive,
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one,
And I may say, that many a time
I wish'd they all were gone:
They dwindled one by one away;
For me it was a woful day.

"To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies cross'd my mind;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me.
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without;
And crazily, and wearily,
I went my work about.
Ofttimes I thought to run away;
For me it was a woful day.

"Sir, 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily, with my growing store,
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I pray'd, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week and every day
My flock it seem'd to melt away.

"They dwindled, sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe—
And then, at last, from three to two;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one;
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none;—
To-day I fetch'd it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock."

A COMPLAINT.

THERE is a change—and I am poor;
Your love hath been, nor long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Bless'd was I then, all bliss above!
Now, for this consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I—shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden WELL.

A well of love—it may be deep;
I trust it is,—and never dry;
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

RUTH.

WHEN Ruth was left half-desolate,
Her father took another mate;

And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wand'ring over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And from that oaten pipe could draw
All sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seem'd to live; her thoughts her own;
Herself her own delight:
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay,
She pass'd her time; and in this way
Grew up to woman's height.

There came a youth from Georgia's shore,—
A military casque he wore
With splendid feathers dress'd;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
Ah! no, he spake the English tongue
And bore a soldier's name;
And when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek,
In finest tones the youth could speak.
While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought;
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear;
Such tales as, told to any maid
By such a youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls, a happy rout!
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants divine and strange
That every hour their blossoms change,
Ten thousand lovely hues!
With budding, fading, faded flowers,
They stand the wonder of the bowers,
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia,* spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The cypress and her spire,—
Of flowers † that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The youth of green savannas spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

And then he said, "How sweet it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
A gard'ner in the shade,
Still wandering with an easy mind
To build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

"What days and what sweet years! Ah me!
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So pass'd in quiet bliss,
And all the while," said he, "to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this!"

And then he sometimes interwove
Dear thoughts about a father's love!
"For there," said he, "are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

* Magnolia grandiflora.
† The splendid appearance of these scarlet flowers, which are scattered with such profusion over the hills in the southern parts of North America, is frequently mentioned by Bartram in his travels.

"Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer!

"Beloved Ruth!"—No more he said.
Sweet Ruth alone at midnight shed
A solitary tear;
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That, on those lonesome floods,
And green savannas, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And with his dancing crest
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roam'd about with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the west.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seem'd allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of Nature wrought,

Fair trees and lovely flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those gorgeous bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions link'd to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impair'd, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feign'd delight
Had woo'd the maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a maid
Whose heart with so much nature play'd?
So kind and so forlorn!

But now the pleasant dream was gone;
No hope, no wish remain'd, not one,—
They stirr'd him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wish'd to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore;
But when they thither came, the youth
Deserted his poor bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pain she had
That she in half a year was mad
And in a prison housed;
And there exulting in her wrongs,
Among the music of her songs,
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May,—
They all were with her in her cell;
And a wild brook, with cheerful knell,
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain;
She from her prison fled;
But of the vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And coming to the banks of Tone,*
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves, she loved them still.
Nor ever tax'd them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A barn her winter bed supplies;
But till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree,)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old.
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is press'd by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place,
Where up and down with easy pace
The horseman-travellers ride.

* The Tone is a river of Somersetshire at no great distance from the Quantock Hills. These hills, which are alluded to a few stanzas below, are extremely beautiful, and in most places richly covered with coppice woods.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have pass'd her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turn'd
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourn'd,
A young and happy child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth! in hallow'd mould
Thy corpse shall buried be;
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT.

BY A FEMALE FRIEND.*

The days are cold, the nights are long,
The north wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
Save thee, my pretty love!

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There 's nothing stirring in the house
Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse,
Then why so busy thou?

Nay! start not at that sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window-pane bedropp'd with rain:
Then, little darling! sleep again,
And wake when it is day.

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER.

One morning (raw it was and wet,
A foggy day in winter time)

* See page 3.

A woman on the road I met,
Not old, though something past her prime:
Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient spirit is not dead:
Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
Proud was I that my country bred
Such strength, a dignity so fair:
She begg'd an alms, like one in poor estate;
I look'd at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
With the first word I had to spare,
I said to her, "Beneath your cloak,
What's that which on your arms you bear?"
She answer'd, soon as she the question heard,
"A simple burthen, sir, a little singing bird."

And thus continuing, she said,
"I had a son, who many a day
Sail'd on the seas; but he is dead;
In Denmark he was cast away;
And I have travell'd far as Hull, to see
What clothes he might have left, or other property.

"The bird and cage they both were his;
'Twas my son's bird; and neat and trim
He kept it: many voyages
His singing-bird hath gone with him;
When last he sail'd he left the bird behind,
As it might be, perhaps, from bodings of his mind.

"He to a fellow-lodger's care
Had left it, to be watch'd and fed,
Till he came back again; and there
I found it when my son was dead;
And now—God help me for my little wit—
I trail it with me, sir! he took so much delight in it."

THE CHILDLESS FATHER.

"Up, Timothy, up, with your staff, and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds."

Of coats and of jackets gray, scarlet, and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

The basin of boxwood,* just six months before,
Had stood on the table at Timothy's door;
A coffin through Timothy's threshold had pass'd;
One child did it bear, and that child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse and the horn, and the "Hark! hark away!"
Old Timothy took up his staff, and he shut,
With a leisurely motion, the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
"The key I must take, for my Helen is dead."
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak,
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET ——— OF ———

WHERE art thou, my belovèd son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despair'd, and have believed,
And be for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss,
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power hath even his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!

* In several parts of the north of England, when a funeral takes place, a basin full of sprigs of boxwood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a sprig of this boxwood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me! no, I suffer'd long
From that ill thought, and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong:
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed:" and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount, how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maim'd, mangled by inhuman men;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summon'd to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for ghosts, but none will force
Their way to me; 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Betwixt the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass:
I question things, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend.

Once in a lonely hamlet I sojourn'd,
In which a lady driven from France did dwell;
The big and lesser griefs, with which she mourn'd,
In friendship she to me would often tell.
This lady, dwelling upon English ground,
Where she was childless, daily did repair
To a poor neighbouring cottage; as I found,
For sake of a young child whose home was there.

Once did I see her clasp the child about,
And take it to herself; and I, next day,
Wish'd in my native tongue to fashion out
Such things as she unto this child might say:
And thus, from what I knew, had heard, and guess'd,
My song the workings of her heart express'd:—
"Dear babe, though daughter of another,
One moment let me be thy mother!

"An infant's face and looks are thine;
And sure a mother's heart is mine:
Thy own dear mother's far away,
At labour in the harvest-field:
Thy little sister is at play;—
What warmth, what comfort would it yield
To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me!

"Across the waters I am come,
And I have left a babe at home:
A long, long way of land and sea!
Come to me—I'm no enemy:
I am the same who at thy side
Sate yesterday, and made a nest
For thee, sweet baby!—thou hast tried,
Thou know'st, the pillow of my breast;
Good, good art thou; alas! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

"Here, little darling, dost thou lie;
An infant thou, a mother I!
Mine wilt thou be—thou hast no fears;
Mine art thou, spite of these my tears.

Alas! before I left the spot,
My baby and its dwelling-place,
The nurse said to me, 'Tears should not
Be shed upon an infant's face,
It was unlucky'—no, no, no;
No truth is in them who say so!

"My own dear little one will sigh,
Sweet babe! and they will let him die.
'He pines,' they'll say, 'it is his doom,
And you may see his hour is come.'
Oh! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay,
Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
And countenance like a summer's day,
They would have hopes of him—and then
I should behold his face again!

"'Tis gone—forgotten—let me do
My best—there was a smile or two;
I can remember them: I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear baby! I must lay thee down;
Thou troublest me with strange alarms;
Smiles hast thou, sweet ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms,
For they confound me: as it is—
I have forgot those smiles of his.

"Oh! how I love thee!—we will stay
Together here this one half-day.
My sister's child, who bears my name,
From France across the ocean came;
She with her mother cross'd the sea;
The babe and mother near me dwell:
My darling, she is not to me
What thou art! though I love her well:
Rest, little stranger, rest thee here!
Never was any child more dear!

"I cannot help it—ill intent
I've none, my pretty innocent!
I weep—I know they do thee wrong,
These tears—and my poor idle tongue.
Oh, what a kiss was that! my cheek
How cold it is! but thou art good;
Thine eyes are on me—they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that quiet face,
My heart again is in its place!

"While thou art mine, my little love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grove;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee.
Here's grass to play with, here are flowers;
I'll call thee by my darling's name;
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same;
His little sister thou shalt be;
And, when once more my home I see,
I'll tell him many tales of thee."

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from o'er the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone;
And underneath the haystack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talk'd and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

"Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me,
But, safe as in a cradle here,
My lovely baby! thou shalt be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

"A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breasts, and pull'd at me.
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good:
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood:
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

"Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain:
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away

Oh! press me with thy little hand:
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers press'd.
The breeze I see is in the tree;
It comes too cool my babe and me.

"Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rocks' edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul:
Then happy lie, for bless'd am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

"Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion I will be;
And I will always be thy guide
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I'll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed;
And if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

"Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest:
'Tis all thine own!—and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown;
But thou wilt live with me in love,
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

"Dread not their taunts, my little life;
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stay'd:
From him no harm my babe can take,
But he, poor man! is wretched made;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

"I'll teach my boy the sweetest things;
I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost suck'd thy fill.
Where art thou gone, my own dear child?
What wicked looks are those I see?
Alas! alas! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me:
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

"Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
For I thy own dear mother am.
My love for thee has well been tried:
I've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade,
I know the earth-nuts fit for food;
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid;
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
And there, my babe, we'll live for aye."

THE IDIOT BOY.

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up—the sky is blue,
The owlet in the moonlight air,
He shouts from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?

Beneath the moon that shines so bright,
Till she is tired, let Betty Foy
With girth and stirrup *fiddle-faddle;*
But wherefore set upon a saddle
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy?

There's scarce a soul that's out of bed;
Good Betty, put him down again,
His lips with joy they burr at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

The world will say 'tis very idle,

Bethink you of the time of night;
There 's not a mother, no not one,
But when she hears what you have done,
O Betty, she 'll be in a fright.

But Betty's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There 's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress:
Old Susan lies abed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband 's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There 's none to help poor Susan Gale;
What must be done—what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetch'd
Her pony, that is mild and good,
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing fagots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,—
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has up upon the saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge that 's in the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a hurly-burly now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge
Was, Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,—
Come home again, whate'er befall,
My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too;
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty 's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for thee, poor Idiot Boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He 's idle all, for very joy.

And while the pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough 's motionless and dead:
The moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship;
Oh, happy, happy, happy John!

And Betty 's standing at the door,
And Betty's face with joy o'erflows;
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim;
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He 's at the guide-post—he turns right,
She watches till he 's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it;
Meek as a lamb the pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
And Johnny 's in a merry tune;
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,—
And on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree,
For of this pony there 's a rumour,
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And when he thinks his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story.
What comfort Johnny soon will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty 's still at Susan's side;
By this time she 's not quite so flurried:
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,—
You plainly in her face may read it,—
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well,
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
"As sure as there 's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, "he 'll be back again;
They 'll both be here—'tis almost ten—
They 'll both be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke—"If Johnny's near,"
Quoth Betty, "he will soon be here,
As sure as there's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight,—
The moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast:
"A little idle sauntering thing!"
With other names an endless string,
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
"How can it be he is so late?
The doctor—he has made him wait,
Susan! they'll both be here anon."

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad quandary;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go or she must stay!
She's in a sad quandary.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither doctor nor his guide
Appears along the moonlight road;
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan she begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drown'd,
Or lost, perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, "God forbid it should be true!"
At the first word that Susan said,
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
"Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

"I must be gone, I must away,
Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb"—
"O God forbid!" poor Susan cries.

"What can I do?" says Betty, going,
"What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan, tell me, and I 'll stay;
I fear you 're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again."

"Nay, Betty, go! good Betty, go!
There 's nothing that can ease my pain."
Then off she hies; but with a prayer
That God poor Susan's life would spare
Till she comes back again.

So through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale:
And how she ran, and how she walk'd,
And all that to herself she talk'd,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower, was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green,
'Twas Johnny, Johnny, everywhere.

She 's past the bridge that 's in the dale;
And now the thought torments her sore.
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon that 's in the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

And now she 's high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There 's neither Johnny nor his horse
Among the fern or in the gorse:
There 's neither doctor nor his guide.

"O saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he 's climb'd into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or sadly he has been misled,
And join'd the wandering gipsy-folk.

"Or him that wicked pony's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he 's pursuing,
Among the ghosts, his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall."

At poor old Susan then she rail'd,
While to the town she posts away;
"If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day."

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The doctor's self would hardly spare;
Unworthy things she talk'd, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The pony had his share.

And now she 's got into the town,
And to the doctor's door she hies;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she 's at the doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The doctor at the casement shews
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old nightcap.

"O doctor! doctor! where 's my Johnny?"
"I'm here, what is 't you want with me?"
"O sir! you know I 'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear boy,
You know him—him you often see;

"He 's not so wise as some folk be."
"The devil take his wisdom," said
The doctor, looking somewhat grim,
"What, woman, should I know of him?"
And grumbling, he went back to bed.

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die!
I thought to find my Johnny here;
But he is neither far nor near;
Oh! what a wretched mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail,
This piteous news so much it shock'd her,
She quite forgot to send the doctor
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she 's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road;
"Oh cruel! I 'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There 's not a single soul abroad."

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sounds are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob-nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin:
A green-grown pond she just has pass'd,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
"O dear, dear pony! my sweet joy!
Oh, carry back my Idiot Boy!
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head:
"The pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well:
Perhaps he 's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood."

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

O reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his horse are doing!
What they 've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he 's turn'd himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All like a silent horseman ghost,
He travels on along the vale.

And now, perhaps, he 's hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Yon valley, that 's so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He 's galloping away, away;
And so he 'll gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures;
O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befell;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me;
Ye Muses! whom I love so well?

Who 's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse, that 's feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny, as I live!

And that 's the very pony too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your pony 's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She 's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy:
She darts as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturn'd the horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud,
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell; but while he laughs
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she's at the pony's tail,
And now she's at the pony's head,—
On that side now, and now on this;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy,
She's happy here, she's happy there,
She is uneasy everywhere;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she.
You hardly can perceive his joy.

"O Johnny, never mind the doctor;
You've done your best, and that is all."
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turn'd the pony's head
From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely look'd at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The pony, Betty, and her boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long Susan lay deep lost in thought,
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her messenger and nurse;
And as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body it grew better.

She turn'd, she toss'd herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

"Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured,
I'll to the wood."—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she posts up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For, while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, "Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen,
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true."

Now, Johnny, all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt, too, he the moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer like a traveller bold,
(His very words I give to you,)
"The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold."
—Thus answer'd Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up to the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path,

Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for beside that boist'rous brook
The mountains have all open'd out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation there is seen; but such
As journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
There is a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that place a story appertains,
Which, though it be ungarnish'd with events,
Is not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first,
The earliest of those tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where were their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly, indeed,)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been, from youth to age,
Of an unusual strength; his mind was keen,
Intense and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence he had learn'd the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the south
Make subterraneous music, like the noise

Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say!
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summon'd him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past;
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks
Were things indifferent to the shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; the hills, which he so oft
Had climb'd with vigorous steps; which had impress'd
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill, or courage, joy, or fear;
Which like a book preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or shelter'd, linking to such acts,
So grateful in themselves, the certainty
Of honourable gain; these fields, these hills,
Which were his living being, even more
Than his own blood—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been pass'd in singleness:
His helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only son,
With two brave sheep-dogs, tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The son and father were come home, even then

Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turn'd to their cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimm'd milk,
Sat round their basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when their meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
And his old father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
Which in our ancient uncouth country style,
Did with a huge projection overbrow
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim, the housewife hung a lamp,
An aged utensil, which had perform'd
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found
And left the couple neither gay, perhaps,
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke was in his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
Father and son, while late into the night
The housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
The thrifty pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmal-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the house itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale
Both old and young, was named the "Evening Star."

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear,—
Effect which might perhaps have been produced

By that instinctive tenderness, the same
Blind spirit which is in the blood of all—
Or that a child, more than all other gifts,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.

From such, and other causes, to the thoughts
Of the old man his only son was now
The dearest object that he knew on earth.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For dalliance and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rock'd
His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love
(Albeit of a stern, unbending mind)
To have the young one in his sight, when he
Had work by his own door, or when he sat
With sheep before him on his shepherd's stool.
Beneath that large old oak, which near their door
Stood,—and, from its enormous breadth of shade,
Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was call'd
The "Clipping Tree,"* a name which yet it bears.

There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestow'd
Upon the child, if he disturb'd the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hoop'd
With iron, making it throughout, in all
Due requisites, a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipp'd
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely call'd,

* "Clipping" is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause, not always, I believe,
Receiving from his father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff or voice,
Or looks, or threat'ning gestures could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,
Not fearing toil nor length of weary ways,
He with his father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old man's heart seem'd born again?

Thus in his father's sight the boy grew up:
And now when he had reach'd his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means,—
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had press'd upon him,—and old Michael now
Was summon'd to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlook'd-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had gather'd so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seem'd that his sole refuge was to sell
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart fail'd him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun itself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I.

And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and make an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and, if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel: the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?" At this the old man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
"There 's Richard Bateman," thought she to herself,
"He was a parish boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And half-pennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they fill'd with pedlar's wares;
And with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who out of many chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas, where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and moneys to the poor,
And at his birthplace built a chapel floor'd
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands."
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Pass'd quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brighten'd. The old man was glad,
And thus resumed: "Well, Isabel, this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger,—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night—
If he could go, the boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth

With a light heart. The housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work; for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the two last nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go;
We have no other child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away.
For if thou leave thy father, he will die."
The youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recover'd heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

Next morning Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appear'd
As cheerful as a grove in spring; at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
To which requests were added that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to shew it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house return'd, the old man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The housewife answer'd, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice, he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had design'd
To build a sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gather'd up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walk'd;
And soon as they had reach'd the place he stopp'd,
And thus the old man spake to him:—"My son,

To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should speak
Of things thou canst not know of. After thou
First cam'st into the world—as it befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day pass'd on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy mother's breast. Month follow'd month,
And in the open fields my life was pass'd,
And on the mountains, else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou know'st, in us the old and young
Have play'd together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobb'd aloud. The old man grasp'd his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good father; and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together; here they lived,
As all their forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loath
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wish'd that thou shouldst live the life they lived.
But 'tis a long time to look back, my son,
And see so little gain from sixty years.
These fields were burthen'd when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toil'd and toil'd; God bless'd me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
It looks as if it never could endure
Another master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,

If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go." At this the old man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, boy, be of good hope!—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and stout;—do thou thy part,
I will do mine—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resign'd to thee;
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face. Heaven bless thee, boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes—It should be so—Yes—yes—
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us! But I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us. But, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The shepherd ended here; and Luke stoop'd down,
And, as his father had requested, laid
The first stone of the sheepfold. At the sight
The old man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He press'd his son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they return'd.
Hush'd was that house in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell: with morrow's dawn the boy
Began his journey, and when he had reach'd
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours as he pass'd their doors

Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That follow'd him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months pass'd on: and once again
The shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would break the heart:—old Michael found it so.
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember'd the old man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still look'd up upon the sun,
And listen'd to the wind; and as before
Perform'd all kinds of labour for his sheep.
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, with that his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years from time to time
He at the building of his sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinish'd when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death th' estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage which was named "The Evening Star"

Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood: great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood: yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinish'd sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boist'rous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

LAODAMIA.

"With sacrifice, before the rising morn
Perform'd, my slaughter'd lord have I required;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal gods have I desired:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight, great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endow'd
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands,
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows,
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived? O joy!
What doth she look on—whom doth she behold?
Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence—his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis he!
And a god leads him—wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake, and touch'd her with his wand
That calms all fear: "Such grace hath crown'd thy prayer,
Laodamia, that at Jove's command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift; behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassion'd queen her lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essay'd;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The phantom parts—but parts to reunite,
And reassume his place before her sight.

"Protesilaus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestow'd
This precious boon,—and bless'd a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia, doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive,
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou know'st, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touch'd the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat did not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
That then, when tens of thousands were depress'd
By doubt, propell'd thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou shouldst cheat the malice of the grave;
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enrich'd Thessalian air.

"No spectre greets me,—no vain shadow this:
Come, blooming hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day a second time thy bride!"
Jove frown'd in heaven: the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Know, virtue were not virtue if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult of the soul;
The fervour—not the impotence of love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn——"

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb

Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in beauty's bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic, potent over sun and star,
Is love—though oft to agony distress'd;
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou go'st, I follow——" "Peace!" he said—
She look'd upon him and was calm'd and cheer'd;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appear'd
Elysian beauty—melancholy grace—
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsigh'd for, and the future sure;
Spake, as a witness, of a second birth
For all that is most perfect upon earth:

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, that sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earn'd
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discern'd,
Who from ignoble games and revelry*
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight
While tears were thy best pastime,—day and night:

"And while my youthful peers, before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detain'd;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchain'd.

"The wish'd-for wind was given:—I then revolved
Our future course, upon the silent sea;

* For this feature in the character of Protesilaus, see the "Iphigenia in Aulis" of Euripides.

And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, ofttimes bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, belovèd wife;
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains—flowers;
My new-plann'd cities, and unfinish'd towers.

"But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
'Behold, they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?'—
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurr'd:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our bless'd reunion in the shades below.
Th' invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

"Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object:—Love was given,
Encouraged, sanction'd, chiefly for this end:
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annull'd; her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."

Aloud she shriek'd—for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis vain:
The hours are past,—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way—
And on the palace floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
Her, who, in reason's spite, yet without crime,
Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
Deliver'd from the galling yoke of time,
And these frail elements—to gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourn'd by man, and not by man alone,

As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertain'd)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gain'd
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits wither'd at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight!

POEMS OF THE FANCY.

TO THE DAISY.

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill, in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly nature's love partake
Of thee, sweet Daisy!

When soothed a while by milder airs,
Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly shades his few gray hairs;
Spring cannot shun thee;
Whole summer fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
If welcomed once, thou count'st it gain;
Thou art not daunted,
Nor car'st if thou be set at naught:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impearling;
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed, by many a claim,
The poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprison'd by hot sunshine lie

Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He need but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couch'd an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy, wrong or right,
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to thee should turn,
I drink, out of an humbler urn,
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

When, smitten by the morning ray,
I see thee rise, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when at dusk by dews oppress'd,
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how nor whence,
Nor whither going:

Child of the year! that round dost run
Thy course, bold lover of the sun,
And cheerful when the day's begun
As morning leveret,
The long-lost praise* thou shalt regain;
Dear thou shalt be to future men,
As in old time;—thou not in vain
Art nature's favourite.

* See, in Chaucer and the elder poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rush'd o'er the wood with startling sound:
Then all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones patter'd round.
Where leafless oaks tower'd high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With wither'd leaves is cover'd o'er,
You could not lay a hair between:
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where'er the hailstones drop,
The wither'd leaves all skip and hop,
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and everywhere
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if, with pipes and music rare,
Some Robin Goodfellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
How silently, and with how wan a face!*
Where art thou? Thou whom I have seen on high
Running among the clouds a wood-nymph's race!
Unhappy nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The northern wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle-horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, goddess! this should be:
And all the stars now shrouded up in heaven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company.
What strife would then be yours, fair creatures, driven,
Now up, now down, and sparkling in your glee!
But, Cynthia, should to thee the palm be given,
Queen, both for beauty and for majesty.

THE GREEN LINNET.

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread

* From a sonnet of Sir Philip Sydney's.

Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequester'd nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And flowers and birds once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I mark'd, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion.
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May,
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment;
A life, a presence like the air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair,
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle in the gusty breeze,
Behold him perch'd in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

While thus before my eyes he gleams,
A brother of the leaves he seems;
When in a moment forth he teems
His little song in gushes:
As if it pleased him to disdain
And mock the form which he did feign,
While he was dancing with the train
Of leaves among the bushes.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE.*

Pansies, lilies, kingcups, daisies:
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there 's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;

* Common pilewort.

Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower!—I'll make a stir
Like a great astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about its nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude;
Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers.
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home:
Spring is coming—thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost shew thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane—there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours!

Buttercups that will be seen
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Scorn'd and slighted upon earth!
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Singing at my heart's command,
In the lanes my thoughts pursuing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

Pleasures newly found are sweet
When they lie about our feet:
February last, my heart
First at sight of thee was glad;
All unheard of as thou art,
Thou must needs, I think, have had,
Celandine! and long ago,
Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
Whosoe'er the man might be,
Who the first with pointed rays
(Workman worthy to be sainted)
Set the sign-board in a blaze,
When the risen sun he painted,
Took the fancy from a glance
At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
News of winter's vanishing,
And the children build their bowers,
Sticking kerchief-pots of mould
All about with full-blown flowers,
Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
With the proudest thou art there,
Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sigh'd to measure
By myself a lonely pleasure,
Sigh'd to think I read a book
Only read, perhaps, by me;

Yet I long could overlook
Thy bright coronet and thee,
And thy arch and wily ways,
And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
While the patient primrose sits
Like a beggar in the cold,
Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
Slipp'st into thy shelter'd hold;
Bright as any of the train
When ye all are out again.

Thou art not beyond the moon,
But a thing "beneath our shoon:" *
Let, as old Magellan did,
Others roam about the sea;
Build who will a pyramid;
Praise it is enough for me,
If there be but three or four
Who will love my little flower.

THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE.

"BEGONE, thou fond presumptuous elf,"
Exclaim'd a thundering voice,
"Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!"
A falling water swoln with snows
Thus spake to a poor Brier-rose,
That, all bespatter'd with his foam,
And dancing high, and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

"Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny thing!
I'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."
The flood was tyrannous and strong;
The patient Brier suffer'd long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past:
But, seeing no relief, at last
He ventured to reply.

"Ah!" said the Brier, "blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?

* Scottice, shoes.

We who in this, our natal spot,
Once lived a happy life!
You stirr'd me on my rocky bed—
What pleasure through my veins you spread!
The summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshen'd and bedew'd;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

"When Spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths, to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours
I shelter'd you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves—now shed and gone,
The linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when you
Had little voice or none.

"But now proud thoughts are in your breast—
What grief is mine you see.
Ah! would you think, even yet how blest
Together we might be!
Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
Some ornaments to me are left—
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I, in my humble way,
Would deck you many a winter's day,
A happy Eglantine!"

What more he said I cannot tell:
The torrent thunder'd down the dell
With unabating haste:
I listen'd, nor aught else could hear;
The Brier quaked—and much I fear
Those accents were his last.

THE OAK AND THE BROOM.

A PASTORAL.

His simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.
One winter's night, when through the trees
The wind was thundering, on his knees
His youngest born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy quire,

Were seated round their blazing fire,
This tale the shepherd told:—

"I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon—
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-west;
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus address'd—

'Eight weary weeks, through rock and clay,
Along this mountain's edge,
The frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up! and think, above your head
What trouble surely will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a thing as you!

'You are preparing, as before,
To deck your slender shape;
And yet, just three years back—no more—
You had a strange escape.
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke;
It came, you know, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward it bent its way:
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o'er your head, as you may see,
'Tis hanging to this day!

'The thing had better been asleep,
Whatever thing it were,
Or breeze, or bird, or dog, or sheep,
That first did plant you there.
For you and your green twigs decoy
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower;
And, trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon!
Will perish in one hour.

'From me this friendly warning take'—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus to keep herself awake
Did gently interpose:

'My thanks for your discourse are due;
That it is true, and more than true,
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, be we young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

'Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam?
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My father, many a happy year,
Here spread his careless blossoms, here
Attain'd a good old age.

'E'en such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth, a favour'd plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am cover'd o'er with flowers;
And, when the frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This plant can never die.

'The butterfly all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade, the mother ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy, which they partake,
It is a joy to me.'

"Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renew'd:
But in the branches of the Oak
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees,
To rest and murmur there.

"One night, my children, from the North
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I pass'd.
The storm had fall'n upon the Oak,
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirl'd, and whirl'd him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day."

THE REDBREAST AND THE BUTTERFLY.

Art thou the bird whom man loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When autumn winds are sobbing?
Art thou the Peter of Norway boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?
The bird whom by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men?
Could Father Adam* open his eyes,
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He'd wish to close them again.

If the butterfly knew but his friend,
Hither his flight he would bend;
And find his way to me.
Under the branches of the tree,
In and out, he darts about;
Can this be the bird, to man so good,
That, after their bewildering,
Did cover with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood?

What ail'd thee, Robin, that thou couldst pursue
A beautiful creature,
That is gentle by nature?
Beneath the summer sky
From flower to flower let him fly;
'Tis all that he wishes to do.
The cheerer thou of our in-door sadness,
He is the friend of our summer gladness:

* "Paradise Lost," Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the eagle chasing "two birds of gayest plume," and the gentle hart and hind pursued by their enemy.

What hinders, then, that ye should be
Playmates in the sunny weather,
And fly about in the air together?
His beautiful wings in crimson are dress'd,
A crimson as bright as thine own!
If thou wouldst be happy in thy nest,
O pious bird! whom man loves best,
Love him, or leave him alone!

TO THE DAISY.

With little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Sweet Daisy! oft I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy:
Thou unassuming common-place
Of nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace,
Which love makes for thee!

Oft do I sit by thee at ease,
And weave a web of similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure, of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden of love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies dress'd;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seem to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy—
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over.
The shape will vanish, and behold!
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some fairy bold
In fight to cover.

I see thee glittering from afar;—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are

In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air, thou seem'st to rest;
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!

Sweet flower! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

TO THE SAME FLOWER.

Bright flower, whose home is everywhere!
A pilgrim bold in nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy or sorrow,
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that man is soon depress'd—
A thoughtless thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And thou wouldst teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind,
And every season?

Thou wanderest the wide world about,
Uncheck'd by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to th' occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

TO A SKY-LARK.

Up with me! up with me, into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;

Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With all the heavens about thee ringing.
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walk'd through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a fairy,
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Up with me, up with me, high and high,
To thy banqueting-place in the sky!
Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest, for thy love and thy rest;
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loath

To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy liver!
With a soul as strong as a mountain river,
Pouring out praise to th' almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!
Hearing thee, or else some other,
As merry a brother,
I on the earth will go plodding on,
By myself, cheerfully, till the day is done.

TO A SEXTON.

Let thy wheelbarrow alone—
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bonehouse, bone on bone?
'Tis already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid.
These died in peace each with the other,
Father, sister, friend, and brother,

Mark the spot to which I point!
From this platform, eight feet square,
Take not even a finger-joint:
Andrew's whole fireside is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,
From weakness, now, and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride—
How he glories when he sees
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families!
By the heart of man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, old gray-beard! art the warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus, then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbours in mortality.
And should I live through sun and rain
Seven widow'd years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the loved and lover!

Who fancied what a pretty sight
This rock would be if edged around
With living snowdrops—circlet bright?
How glorious to this orchard ground!
Who loved the little rock and set
Upon its head this coronet?

Was it the humour of a child?
Or rather of some love-sick maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The shepherd queen, were thus array'd!
Of man mature, or matron sage!
Or old man toying with his age?

I ask'd—'twas whisper'd, the device
To each or all might well belong:
It is the spirit of paradise
That prompts such work, a spirit strong,
That gives to all the self-same bent
Where life is wise and innocent.

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING JEW.

Though the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Though, as if with eagle pinion,
O'er the rocks the chamois roam,
Yet he has some small dominion
Where he feels himself at home.

If on windy days the raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less he loves his haven
In the bosom of the cliff.

Though the sea-horse in the ocean
Own no dear domestic cave,
Yet he slumbers without motion
On the calm and silent wave.

Day and night my toils redouble!
Never nearer to the goal;
Never—never does the trouble
Of the wanderer leave my soul.

THE SEVEN SISTERS; OR, THE SOLITUDE OF BINNORIE.

Seven daughters had Lord Archibald,
All children of one mother;
I could not say in one short day
What love they bore each other.
A garland of seven lilies wrought!
Seven Sisters that together dwell;
But he, bold knight as ever fought,
Their father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie!

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a rover brave
To Binnorie is steering:
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle-horn.
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,

The seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right—
Of your fair household, father knight,
Methinks you take small heed!
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And, over hill and hollow,
With menace proud and insult loud,
The youthful rovers follow.
Cried they, "Your father loves to roam
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind!"
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

Some close behind, some side by side,
Like clouds in stormy weather,
They run and cry, "Nay, let us die,
And let us die together."
A lake was near; the shore was steep;
There never foot had been;
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor ever more were seen.
Sing mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.
Seven little islands, green and bare,
Have risen from out the deep:
The fishers say, those sisters fair
By fairies are all buried there,
And there together sleep.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The Solitude of Binnorie.

—"*Pleasure is spread through the earth*
In stray gifts, to be claim'd by whoever shall find."

By their floating mill,
Which lies dead and still,

Behold yon prisoners three!
The miller with two dames, on the breast of the Thames;
The platform is small, but there's room for them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tether'd fast;
To the small wooden isle where, their work to beguile,
They from morning to even take whatever is given;
And many a blithe day they have pass'd.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,— there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Man and maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music's a prey which they seize;
It plays not for them,—what matter! 'tis theirs;
And if they had care, it has scatter'd their cares,
While they dance, crying, "Long as ye please!"

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts, to be claim'd by whoever shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the Spring
Rouse the birds, and they sing;
If the wind do but stir for his proper delight
Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss;
Each wave, one and t'other, speeds after his brother;
They are happy, for that is their right!

THE KITTEN AND THE FALLING LEAVES.

That way look, my infant, lo!
What a pretty baby-show!
See the kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Wither'd leaves—one—two—and three—
From the lofty elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,

Eddying round and round they sink,
Softly, slowly: one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf convey'd
Sylph or fairy hither tending,—
To his lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In this wavering parachute.
——But the kitten how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow;
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop; and there are none—
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half-way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjuror;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics play'd in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure!

'Tis a pretty baby-treat;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet;
Here, for neither babe nor me,
Other playmate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings,
(In the sun, or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade,)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale, so blithe a place;
Multitudes are swept away,
Never more to breathe the day:
Some are sleeping; some in bands
Travell'd into distant lands;

Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood;
And among the kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.—
Where is he that giddy sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung with head towards the ground,
Flutter'd, perch'd, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound;
Lithest, gaudiest harlequin!
Prettiest tumbler ever seen!
Light of heart, and light of limb,
What is now become of him?
Lambs that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sober'd by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighbouring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain;
Vainly morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy:
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter e'en than gaiety?
Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which nature
Furnishes to every creature;
Whatsoe'er we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show—
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks,—
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Laura's face;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms

Thee, baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair!
And I will have my careless season,
Spite of melancholy reason.
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladsomeness.
Pleased by any random toy;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought;
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with life's falling leaf.

A FRAGMENT.

Between two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flow'rets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a cottage hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish boy.

In clouds above the lark is heard,—
He sings his blithest and his best;
But in this lonesome nook the bird
Did never build her nest.
No beast no bird hath here his home;
The bees, borne on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers, to other dells,
Nor ever linger there.
The Danish boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.

A spirit of noonday is he,
He seems a form of flesh and blood;
Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
Nor herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew;
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in spring;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

A harp is from his shoulder slung;
He rests the harp upon his knee;
And there, in a forgotten tongue,
He warbles melody.
Of flocks upon the neighbouring hills
He is the darling and the joy·
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain ponies prick their ears,—
They hear the Danish boy,
While in the dell he sits alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

There sits he: in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove:
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead boy, he is serene.
* * * * *

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER,

ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A MONTH OLD ON THAT DAY.

Hast thou then survived,
Mild offspring of infirm humanity,
Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
The most forlorn, one life of that bright star,
The second glory of the heavens? Thou hast—
Already hast survived that great decay;
That transformation through the wide earth felt,

And by all nations. In that Being's sight
From whom the race of human kind proceed,
A thousand years are but as yesterday;
And one day's narrow circuit is to Him
Not less capacious than a thousand years.
But what is time? What outward glory? Neither
A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend
Through "heaven's eternal year."—Yet hail to thee,
Frail, feeble monthling!—by that name, methinks,
Thy scanty breathing-time is portion'd out
Not idly. Hadst thou been of Indian birth,
Couch'd on a casual bed of moss and leaves,
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the churlish elements exposed
On the blank plains,—the coldness of the night,
Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face
Of beauty, by the changing moon adorn'd,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of those
Who might have wander'd with thee. Mother's love,
Nor less than mother's love in other breasts,
Will, among us warm clad and warmly housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds
Where fancy hath small liberty to grace
Th' affections, to exalt them or refine;
And the maternal sympathy itself,
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless tie
Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours!
Even now—to solemnise thy helpless state,
And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty—parallels have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a father's thoughts,
Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky.
And first, thy sinless progress through a world
By sorrow darken'd and by care disturb'd
Apt likeness bears to hers through gather'd clouds
Moving untouch'd in silver purity,
And cheering ofttimes their reluctant gloom.
Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain:
But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy horn
With brightness!—leaving her to post along,
And range about—disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she wears.
Once up, once down the hill, one journey, babe,

That will suffice thee; and it seems that now
Thou hast foreknowledge that such task is thine;
Thou travell'st so contentedly, and sleep'st
In such a heedless peace. Alas! full soon
Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
Changed countenance, like an object sullied o'er
By breathing mist; and thine appears to be
A mournful labour, while to her is given
Hope—and a renovation without end.
That smile forbids the thought;—for on thy face
Smiles are beginning, like the beams of dawn,
To shoot and circulate; smiles have there been seen,—
Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness; or shall those smiles be call'd
Feelers of love,—put forth as if t' explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy way
Through a strait passage intricate and dim?
Such are they,—and the same are tokens, signs,
Which, when the appointed season hath arrived,
Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt;
And reason's godlike power be proud to own.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION.

THERE was a boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander! Many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Press'd closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
Of mirth and jocund din! And, when it chanced
That pauses of deep silence mock'd his skill,
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Fair are the woods, and beauteous is the spot,
The vale where he was born: the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village school;
And there, along that bank, when I have pass'd
At evening, I believe that oftentimes
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!

TO THE CUCKOO.

O BLITHE new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice:
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

While I am lying on the grass,
Thy loud note smites my ear!
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near!

I hear thee babbling to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers;
And unto me thou bring'st a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listen'd to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still long'd for, never seen!

And I can listen to thee yet!
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fairy place;
That is fit home for thee!

A NIGHT-PIECE.

THE sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whiten'd by the moon,
Which through that vale is indistinctly seen,
A dull contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread that not a shadow falls,

Chequering the ground, from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller as he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Follow'd by multitudes of stars, that, small,
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives. How fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent; still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturb'd by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

YEW-TREES.

THERE is a yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore,
Not loath to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy, ere they march'd
To Scotland's heaths; or those that cross'd the sea,
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poictiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary tree!—a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroy'd. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal four of Borrowdale,
Join'd in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks!—and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Upcoiling, and inveterately convolved,—
Nor uninform'd with phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane; a pillar'd shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, deck'd
With unrejoicing berries, ghostly shapes

May meet at noontide—Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight—Death the skeleton,
And Time the shadow,—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple, scatter'd o'er
With altars undisturb'd of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie and listen to the mountain flood,
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB, CUMBERLAND.

This height a ministering angel might select:
For from the summit of Black Comb, (dread name
Derived from clouds and storms!) the amplest range
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands: low, dusky tracts,
Where Trent is nurs'd, far southward! Cambrian hills
To the south-west, a multitudinous show;
And, in a line of eye-sight link'd with these,
The hoary peaks of Scotland that give birth
To Teviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and Clyde;
Crowding the quarter whence the sun comes forth,
Gigantic mountains rough with crags; beneath,
Right at the imperial station's western base,
Main ocean, breaking audibly, and stretch'd
Far into silent regions, blue and pale;
And visibly engirding Mona's Isle,
That, as we left the plain, before our sight
Stood like a lofty mount, uplifting slowly
(Above the convex of the watery globe)
Into clear view the cultured fields that streak
Its habitable shores; but now appears
A dwindled object, and submits to lie
At the spectator's feet. Yon azure ridge,
Is it a perishable cloud—or there
Do we behold the frame of Erin's coast?
Land sometimes by the roving shepherd swain
(Like the bright confines of another world)
Not doubtfully perceived. Look homeward, now!
In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
The spectacle—how pure! Of Nature's works,
In earth, and air, and earth-embracing sea,
A revelation infinite it seems;
Display august of man's inheritance,
Of Britain's calm felicity and power.

NUTTING.

It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days which cannot die;
When forth I sallied from our cottage-door,*
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand, and turn'd my steps
Towards the distant woods, a figure quaint,
Trick'd out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal dame.
Motley accoutrement—of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,
More ragged than need was. Among the woods,
And o'er the pathless rocks, I forced my way,
Until, at length, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Droop'd with its wither'd leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation, but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with milk-white clusters hung,
A virgin scene! A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet,—or beneath the trees I sat
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I play'd;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been bless'd
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons reappear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever,—and I saw the sparkling foam,
And with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, beneath the shady trees,
Lay round me, scatter'd like a flock of sheep,
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragg'd to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,

* The house in which I was boarded during the time I was at school.

Deform'd and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past,
Even then, when from the bower I turn'd away
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees and the intruding sky.
Then, dearest maiden! move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly plann'd,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

O Nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of ebullient heart:

These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the god of wine
Had help'd thee to a valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night,
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale this very day,
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze;
He did not cease, but coo'd, and coo'd;
And somewhat pensively he woo'd:
He sang of love with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith and inward glee;
That was the song—the song for me!

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown:
This child I to myself will take:
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn,
That, wild with glee across the lawn,
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute, insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
E'en in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear

In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake. The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seem'd a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees,
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees!

THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE.

WHEN the brothers reach'd the gateway,
Eustace pointed with his lance
To the horn which there was hanging;
Horn of the inheritance.
Horn it was which none could sound,
No one upon living ground.
Save he who came as rightful heir
To Egremont's domains and castle fair.

Heirs from ages without record
Had the house of Lucie born,
Who of right had claim'd the lordship
By the proof upon the horn:
Each at the appointed hour
Tried the horn,—it own'd his power;
He was acknowledged: and the blast
Which good Sir Eustace sounded was the last.

With his lance Sir Eustace pointed,
And to Hubert thus said he:
"What I speak this horn shall witness
For thy better memory.
Hear, then, and neglect me not!
At this time, and on this spot,
The words are utter'd from my heart,
As my last earnest prayer ere we depart.

"On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land;
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day;
Return, and sound the horn, that we
May have a living house still left in thee!"

"Fear not," quickly answer'd Hubert;
"As I am thy father's son,
What thou askest, noble brother,
With God's favour shall be done."
So were both right well content:
From the castle forth they went;
And at the head of their array
To Palestine the brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought, (the Lucies
Were a line for valour famed,)
And where'er their strokes alighted,
There the Saracens were tamed.
Whence, then, could it come, the thought
By what evil spirit brought?
Oh! can a brave man wish to take
His brother's life, for land's and castle's sake?

"Sir," the ruffians said to Hubert,
"Deep he lies in Jordan flood."
Stricken by this ill assurance,
Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
"Take your earnings. Oh! that I
Could have *seen* my brother die!"
It was a pang that vex'd him then!
And oft return'd—again, and yet again.

Months pass'd on, and no Sir Eustace
Nor of him were tidings heard.
Wherefore, bold as day, the murderer
Back again to England steer'd.
To his castle Hubert sped;
He has nothing now to dread.

But silent and by stealth he came,
And at an hour which nobody could name.

None could tell if it were night-time,
Night or day, at even or morn;
For the sound was heard by no one
Of the proclamation horn.
But bold Hubert lives in glee:
Months and years went smilingly;
With plenty was his table spread;
And bright the lady is who shares his bed.

Likewise he had sons and daughters;
And, as good men do, he sate
At his board by these surrounded,
Flourishing in fair estate.
And, while thus in open day,
Once he sate, as old books say,
A blast was utter'd from the horn,
Where, by the castle gate, it hung forlorn.

'Tis the breath of good Sir Eustace:
He is come to claim his right:
Ancient castle, woods, and mountains
Hear the challenge with delight.
Hubert! though the blast be blown,
He is helpless and alone:
Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word!
And there he may be lodged, and thou be lord.

Speak!—astounded Hubert cannot;
And if power to speak he had,
All are daunted, all the household,
Smitten to the heart and sad,
'Tis Sir Eustace: if it be
Living man, it must be he!
Thus Hubert thought in his dismay,
And by a postern gate he slunk away.

Long, and long was he unheard of:
To his brother then he came,
Made confession, ask'd forgiveness,
Ask'd it by a brother's name,
And by all the saints in heaven,
And of Eustace was forgiven:
Then in a convent went to hide
His melancholy head, and there he died.

But Sir Eustace, whom good angels
Had preserved from murderers' hands,
And from pagan chains had rescued,
Lived with honour on his lands.

Sons he had, saw sons of theirs;
And through ages, heirs of heirs,
A long posterity renown'd,
Sounded the horn which they alone could sound.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL.

A TRUE STORY.

Oh! what's the matter—what's the matter?
What is 't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle gray and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who pass'd her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling;
And then her three hours' work at night!
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire,—
Her hut was on a cold hill-side,
And in that country coals are dear,
For they come far by wind and tide.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage;
But she, poor woman! dwelt alone.

'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer day,
Then at her door the *canty* dame
Would sit, as any linnet gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh, then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead!
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

Oh, joy for her! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout;
And scatter'd many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, wood or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could anything be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And now and then, it must be said
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake;
And vow'd that she should be detected,
And he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watch'd to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand:
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again!—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill.

Right glad was he when he beheld her;
Stick after stick did Goody pull:

He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had fill'd her apron full.
When with her load she turn'd about,
The by-road back again to take,
He started forward with a shout,
And sprung upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, "I've caught you, then, at last!"
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she pray'd
To God, that is the Judge of all.

She pray'd, her wither'd hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
"God! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm!"
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray,
Young Harry heard what she had said:
And icy cold he turn'd away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow;—
Alas, that day, for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he:
Another was on Thursday bought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,—
And blankets were about him pinn'd;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
"Poor Harry Gill is very cold."
A-bed or up, by night or day,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

AT the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
There 's a thrush that sings loud—it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has pass'd by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripp'd with her pail,
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all pass'd away from her eyes.

POWER OF MUSIC.

An Orpheus! an Orpheus!—yes, faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old;—
Near the stately Pantheon you 'll meet with the same,
In the street that from Oxford hath borrow'd its name.

His station is there; and he works on the crowd,
He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him?

What an eager assembly—what an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheer'd, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthen'd soul is no longer oppress'd.

As the moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
So he, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-brow'd Jack,
And the pale-visaged baker, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'prentice was passing in haste—
What matter! he 's caught—and his time runs to waste—
The newsman is stopp'd, though he stops on the fret,
And the half-breathless lamplighter, he 's in the net!

The porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The lass with her barrow wheels hither her store;—
If a thief could be here he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the musician, 'tis all that she sees;

He stands, back'd by the wall; he abates not his din;
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in,
From the old and the young, from the poorest—and there!
The one-pennied boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a band;
I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the while
If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
Can he keep himself still, if he would? oh, not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

There 's a cripple who leans on his crutch; like a tower
That long has lean'd forward, leans hour after hour!—
A mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue!

STEPPING WESTWARD.

While my fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Katrine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a hut, where, in the course of our tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What, you are stepping westward?"

"*What, you are stepping westward?*"—"*Yea.*"
'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of chance;
Yet who would stop, or fear t' advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seem'd to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny;
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seem'd to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake;
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy;
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fix'd upon the glowing sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

GLEN-ALMAIN; OR, THE NARROW GLEN.

In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the "Narrow Glen;"
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heap'd, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;

Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved; and in this way express'd
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell
Would break the silence of this dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
And happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL.

(AT INVERSNAID, UPON LOCHLOMOND.)

SWEET Highland girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head;
And these gray rocks; this household lawn;
These trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay, a quiet road,
That holds in shelter thy abode;
In truth, together ye do seem
Like something fashion'd in a dream;
Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
Yet dream and vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart!
God shield thee to thy latest years!
I neither know thee nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are fill'd with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here, scatter'd like a random seed,
Remote from men, thou dost not need
The embarrass'd look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness;
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a mountaineer,
A face with gladness overspread!
Sweet looks, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech;
A bondage sweetly brook'd, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind,
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee, who art so beautiful?
Oh, happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways and dress,
A shepherd, thou a shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder brother I would be,
Thy father, anything to thee!
Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our memory, feel that she hath eyes;
Then, why should I be loath to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;

To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loath, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And thee, the spirit of them all!

THE SOLITARY REAPER.

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself.
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain.
Oh, listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
So sweetly to reposing bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt
Among Arabian sands:
No sweeter voice was ever heard
In spring-time from a cuckoo-bird
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listen'd till I had my fill:
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

WRITTEN IN MARCH,

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER.

THE cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest,
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!
Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The plough-boy is whooping—anon—anon:
There's joy in the mountains;
There's joy in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

GIPSIES.

YET are they here—the same unbroken knot
Of human beings, in the self-same spot!
Men, women, children, yea, the frame
Of the whole spectacle the same!
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night,
That on their gipsy-faces falls,
Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours, are gone while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
Much witnessing of change and cheer—
Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary sun betook himself to rest,
Then issued vesper from the fulgent west,
Outshining like a visible god
The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour,
And one night's diminution of her power,
Behold the mighty moon! this way
She looks as if at them—but they

Regard not her. Oh, better wrong and strife,
Better vain deeds, or evil, than such life!
The silent heavens have goings-on;
The stars have tasks—but these have none!

BEGGARS.

She had a tall man's height, or more;
No bonnet screen'd her from the heat;
A long drab-colour'd cloak she wore,
A mantle reaching to her feet:
What other dress she had I could not know;
Only she wore a cap that was as white as snow.

In all my walks, through field or town,
Such figure had I never seen:
Her face was of Egyptian brown:
Fit person was she for a queen,
To head those ancient Amazonian files:
Or ruling bandit's wife, among the Grecian isles.

Before me begging did she stand,
Pouring out sorrows like a sea;
Grief after grief. On English land
Such woes I knew could never be;
And yet a boon I gave her; for the creature
Was beautiful to see; "a weed of glorious feature!"

I left her, and pursued my way;
And soon before me did espy
A pair of little boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly;
The taller follow'd with his hat in hand,
Wreath'd round with yellow flowers, the gayest of the land.

The other wore a rimless crown,
With leaves of laurel stuck about:
And they both follow'd up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout:
Two brothers seem'd they, eight and ten years old;
And like that woman's face as gold is like to gold.

They bolted on me thus, and lo!
Each ready with a plaintive whine;
Said I, "Not half an hour ago
Your mother has had alms of mine."
"That cannot be," one answer'd, "she is dead."
"Nay, but I gave her pence, and she will buy you bread."

"She has been dead, sir, many a day."
"Sweet boys, you're telling me a lie;

It was your mother, as I say"—
And in the twinkling of an eye,
"Come, come!" cried one; and, without more ado,
Off to some other play they both together flew.

YARROW UNVISITED. 1803.

(See the various poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite ballad of Hamilton, beginning—

"Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!")

From Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravell'd;
Had trod the banks of Clyde and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travell'd;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own,
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downwards with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There's Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryburgh, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Teviotdale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow;
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
Strange words they seem'd of slight and scorn;
My true love sigh'd for sorrow;
And look'd me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!

Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,*
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path and open strath
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still Saint Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it;
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow?

"If care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loath to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

YARROW VISITED.

SEPTEMBER, 1814.

And is this Yarrow?—*this* the stream
Of which my fancy cherish'd,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perish'd!
Oh, that some minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontroll'd meanderings;

* See Hamilton's ballad, as above.

Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And through her depths Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted,
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow Vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness:
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here t' admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The water-wraith ascended thrice,
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the lay that sings
The haunts of happy lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decay'd,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a ruin hoary!
The shatter'd front of Newark's towers,
Renown'd in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
It promises protection
To studious ease, and generous cares,
And every chaste affection!

How sweet on this autumnal day,
The wild wood's fruits to gather,
And on my true love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreath'd my own!
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the heights,
They melt—and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought! which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

STAR-GAZERS.

What crowd is this—what have we here? we must not pass it by;
A telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky;
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The showman chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy square;
And he 's as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each is ready with the fee,
And envies him that 's looking—what an insight must it be!

Yet, showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy implement have blame,
A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is this resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon, with all her vales, and hills of mightiest fame,
Do they betray us when they 're seen—and are they but a name?

Or is it rather that conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
Or is it, that when human souls a journey long have had,
And are return'd into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

Or must we be constrain'd to think that these spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore prostrate lie?
No, no, this cannot be—men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
One after one they take their turns, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE.

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily, and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the stock-dove broods;
The jay makes answer as the magpie chatters;
And all the air is fill'd with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops; on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist; which, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a traveller then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;

I heard the woods and distant waters roar,
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy!

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no farther go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;
To me that morning did it happen so,
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness and blind thoughts I knew not, nor could name.

I heard the skylark singing in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can he expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
The sleepless soul that perish'd in his pride;
Of him who walk'd in glory and in joy
Behind his plough upon the mountain side:
By our own spirits are we deified;
We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that in this lonely place,
When up and down my fancy thus was driven,
And I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
I saw a man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seem'd that ever wore gray hairs.

My course I stopp'd as soon as I espied
The old man in that naked wilderness:
Close by a pond upon the further side
He stood alone: a minute's space I guess
I watch'd him, he continued motionless:

To the pool's further margin then I drew,
He being all the while before me full in view.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couch'd on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence,
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawl'd forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself.

Such seem'd this man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in their pilgrimage,
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propp'd, his body, limbs, and face,
Upon a long gray staff of shaven wood;
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Beside the little pond or moorish flood,
Motionless as a cloud the old man stood;
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirr'd with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conn'd,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now such freedom as I could I took,
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

A gentle answer did the old man make,
In courteous speech, which forth he slowly drew;
And him with further words I thus bespake:
"What kind of work is that which you pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
He answered me with pleasure and surprise,
And there was, while he spake, a fire about his eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
Yet each in solemn order follow'd each.
With something of a lofty utterance dress'd;
Choice word, and measured phrase; above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men who give to God and man their dues.

He told me that he to this pond had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor.

Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure;
From pond to pond he roam'd, from moor to moor,
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
And in this way he gain'd an honest maintenance.

The old man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard, nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent
To give me human strength and strong admonishment.

My former thoughts return'd: the fear that kills,
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty poets in their misery dead.
But now perplex'd by what the old man said,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travell'd; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the ponds where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old man's shape and speech, all troubled me;
In my mind's eye I seem'd to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renew'd.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully utter'd, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laugh'd myself to scorn, to find
In that decrepit man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely moor."

THE THORN.

THERE is a Thorn—it looks so old,
In truth, you'd find it hard to say

How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and gray.
Not higher than a two years child,
It stands erect, this aged Thorn;
No leaves it has, no thorny points;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone,
With lichens it is overgrown.

Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop:
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
So close, you'd say that they were bent
With plain and manifest intent
To drag it to the ground;
And all had join'd in one endeavour
To bury this poor Thorn for ever.

High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale;
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water, never dry;
I've measured it from side to side:
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

And, close beside this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen;
And mossy net-work too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

Ah me! what lovely tints are there!
Of olive-green and scarlet bright,
In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
Green, red, and pearly-white.

This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the Thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant's grave in size,
As like as like can be:
But never, never anywhere,
An infant's grave was half so fair.

Now, would you see this aged Thorn,
This pond, and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits between the heap
That's like an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
"O misery! O misery!
Oh, woe is me! O misery!"

At all times of the day and night
This wretched woman thither goes;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits,
When the blue daylight's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
"O misery! O misery!
Oh, woe is me! O misery!"

"Now wherefore, thus, by day and night,
In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor woman go?
And why sits she beside the Thorn
When the blue daylight's in the sky,
Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry?—
Oh, wherefore—wherefore? tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry?"

"I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows;
But if you'd gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;
The heap that's like an infant's grave,
The pond—and Thorn, so old and gray;

Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
And if you see her in her hut,
Then to the spot away!—
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there."

"But wherefore to the mountain-top
Can this unhappy woman go,
Whatever star is in the skies,
Whatever wind may blow?"
"Nay, rack your brain—'tis all in vain,
I'll tell you everything I know;
But to the Thorn and to the pond,
Which is a little step beyond,
I wish that you would go;
Perhaps when you are at the place,
You something of her tale can trace.

"I'll give you the best help I can,
Before you up the mountain go,
Up to the dreary mountain-top
I'll tell you all I know
'Tis now some two-and-twenty years
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden's true good will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
And she was happy, happy still
Whene'er she thought of Stephen Hill.

"And they had fix'd the wedding-day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another maid
Had sworn another oath;
And with this other maid to church
Unthinking Stephen went.
Poor Martha! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.

"They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
'Tis said a child was in her womb,
As now to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad;
Yet often she was sober sad
From her exceeding pain.

Oh me! ten thousand times I'd rather
That he had died, that cruel father!

"Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas when we talk'd of this,
Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
That in her womb the infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

"No more I know, I wish I did,
And I would tell it all to you;
For what became of this poor child
There 's none that ever knew;
And if a child was born or no,
There 's no one that could ever tell;
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
There 's no one knows, as I have said;
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

"And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The churchyard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain-head:
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

"But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I've described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climb'd the mountain's height:
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

"'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain,
No screen, no fence could I discover,
And then the wind! in faith it was
A wind full ten times over.
I look'd around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag,—and off I ran,
Head foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A woman seated on the ground.

"I did not speak—I saw her face;
Her face!—it was enough for me;
I turn'd about and heard her cry,
'O misery! O misery!'
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear-blue sky will go;
And when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
'O misery! O misery!'"

"But what's the Thorn—and what's the pond—
And what's the hill of moss to her?
And what's the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir?"
"I cannot tell; but some will say
She hang'd her baby on the tree;
Some say she drown'd it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond:
But all and each agree,
The little babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

"I've heard the moss is spotted red
With drops of that poor infant's blood.
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could!
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby, and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

"And some had sworn on oath that she
Should be to public justice brought;

And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.
But then the beauteous hill of moss
Before their eyes began to stir!
And for full fifty yards around,
The grass,—it shook upon the ground!
But all do still aver
The little babe is buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

"I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is, the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
To drag it to the ground;
And this I know—full many a time
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
'O misery! O misery!
O woe is me! O misery!'"

HART-LEAP WELL.

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond, in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road which leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the Second Part of the following poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

The Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
He turn'd aside towards a vassal's door,
And "Bring another horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another horse!" that shout the vassal heard,
And saddled his best steed, a comely gray;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's hall,
That, as they gallop'd, made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanish'd, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain,

Brach, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight halloo'd, he chid and cheer'd them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
But breath and eyesight fail; and one by one
The dogs are stretch'd among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?—
This chase it looks not like an earthly chase;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain side;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting then, he lean'd against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy;
He neither smack'd his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter lean'd,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious act;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yean'd;
And foaming like a mountain cataract.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretch'd:
His nose half touch'd a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath has fetch'd,
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Was never man in such a joyful case!)
Sir Walter walk'd all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling place.

And climbing up the hill, (it was at least
Nine roods of sheer ascent,) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted beast
Had left imprinted on the verdant ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by living eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

"I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour made for rural joy;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

"A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell!

And they who do make mention of the same
From this day forth shall call it 'Hart-Leap Well.

"And, gallant brute! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

"And in the summer-time, when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour;
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

"Till the foundations of the mountains fail,
My mansion with its arbour shall endure;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!"

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone dead,
With breathless nostrils stretch'd above the spring.—
Soon did the Knight perform what he had said,
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steer'd,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter rear'd,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall,
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter journey'd with his paramour;
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND.

The moving accident is not my trade:
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw, standing in a dell,
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
And, pulling now the rein, my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were gray, with neither arms nor head;
Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
"Here, in old time, the hand of man hath been."

I look'd upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seem'd as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood, in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow: him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The shepherd stopp'd, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old!
But something ails it now; the spot is cursed.

"You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

"The arbour does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great lodge! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

"There 's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

"Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood; but for my part,
I've guess'd, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

"What thoughts must through the creature's brain have pass'd!
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, sir, at this last—
O master! it has been a cruel leap.

"For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his deathbed near the well.

"Here on the grass, perhaps, asleep he sank,
Lull'd by this fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank,
When he had wander'd from his mother's side.

"In April, here beneath the scented thorn,
He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that selfsame spring.

"But now here's neither grass nor pleasant shade,
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees and stones and fountain all are gone."

"Gray-headed shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine:
This beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourn'd by sympathy divine.

"The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom He loves.

"The pleasure-house is dust: behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

"She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

"One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shews and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

SONG,

AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE,

Upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd, to the Estates and Honours of his Ancestors.

High in the breathless hall the minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the song.
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long:—

"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.

Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white;
In love and sisterly delight,
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how she smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But, chiefly, from above the board,
Where sits in state our rightful lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

"They came with banner, spear, and shield;
And it was proved in Bosworth field.
Not long the avenger was withstood—
Earth help'd him with the cry of blood:
St George was for us, and the might
Of blessèd angels crown'd the right.
Loud voice the land hath utter'd forth,
We loudest in the faithful North:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong abodes and castles see
The glory of their royalty.
How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though she is but a lonely tower!
Silent, deserted of her best,
Without an inmate or a guest,
Knight, squire, or yeoman, page or groom;
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her!—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely tower!—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair house by Emont's side,
This day distinguish'd without peer;

To see her master and to cheer
Him, and his lady mother dear!

"Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the mother and the child.
Who will take them from the light?—
Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, mother mild,
Maid and mother undefiled,
Save a mother and her child!

"Now who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a shepherd boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be he who hither came
In secret, like a smother'd flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed,
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the child; and God hath will'd
That those dear words should be fulfill'd,
The lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her babe did say,
'My own, my own, thy fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!'

"Alas! when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turn'd to heaviness and fear.—
Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young bird that is distress'd;
Among thy branches safe he lay,

And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

"A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.—
Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for solemn glee,
And a cheerful company,
That learn'd of him submissive ways,
And comforted his private days.
To his side the fallow deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stoop'd down to pay him fealty;
And both th' undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale Tarn did wait on him,
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
They moved about in open sight,
To and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which angels haunt
On the mountains visitant;
He hath kenn'd them taking wing:
And the caves where fairies sing
He hath enter'd, and been told
By voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
Face of thing that is to be;
And, if men report him right,
He can whisper words of might.—
Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom:
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
'Quell the Scot!' exclaims the lance—
'Bear me to the heart of France'

Is the longing of the shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our shepherd, in his power,
Mail'd and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a reappearing star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the fervent harper did not know
That for a tranquil soul the lay was framed,
Who, long compell'd in humble walks to go,
Was soften'd into feeling, soothed and tamed

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The shepherd lord was honour'd more and more:
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

THE ECHO.

Yes! full surely 'twas the echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to thee, shouting cuckoo!
Giving to thee sound for sound.

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but, oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal life?
Hear not we, unthinking creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife,
Voices of two different natures?

Have not we too?—Yes we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such within ourselves we hear
Ofttimes, ours though sent from far;
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God,—of God they are!

FRENCH REVOLUTION,

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS COMMENCEMENT.*

Oh, pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven! O times!
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!
When Reason seem'd the most to assert her rights,
When most intent on making of herself
A prime enchantress—to assist the work,
Which was then going forward in her name!
Not favour'd spots alone, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise—that which sets
(To take an image which was felt no doubt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirr'd
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it;—they, too, who of gentle mood
Had watch'd all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves;—
Now was it that *both* found, the meek and lofty
Did both find helpers to their heart's desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,—
Were call'd upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia,—subterraneous fields,—
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world

* Reprinted from "The Friend."

Of all of us—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all!

It is no spirit who from heaven hath flown
And is descending on his embassy;
Nor traveller gone from earth the heavens t' espy!
'Tis Hesperus—there he stands with glittering crown,
First admonition that the sun is down,—
For yet it is broad daylight!—clouds pass by;
A few are near him still—and now the sky,
He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.
O most ambitious star! an inquest wrought
Within me when I recognised thy light;
A moment I was startled at the sight;
And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought
That even I beyond my natural race
Might step as thou dost now:—might one day trace
Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength above,
My soul, an apparition in the place,
Tread there, with steps that no one shall reprove!

LINES,

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.

Five years have pass'd; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a sweet inland murmur.*—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The lansdcape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard tufts,
Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
Among the woods and copses, nor disturb
The wild green landscape. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.
Though absent long,
These forms of beauty have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremember'd pleasure; such, perhaps,
As may have had no trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremember'd acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight,
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lighten'd;—that serene and blessèd mood,
In which th' affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood,
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight—when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft, in spirit, have I turn'd to thee,
O sylvan Wye! Thou wand'rer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turn'd to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever Nature led; more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For Nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrow'd from the eye. That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have follow'd, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learn'd
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows, and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,*
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In Nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more

* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I cannot recollect.

Suffer my genial spirits to decay;
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest friend,
My dear, dear friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear sister! And this prayer I make.
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her: 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! nor, perchance,
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

POEMS PROCEEDING FROM SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE, ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE, COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT.

Nay, traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if these barren boughs the bee not loves?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Who he was
That piled these stones, and with the mossy sod
First cover'd o'er, and taught this aged tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember. He was one who own'd
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by Nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favour'd being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow,—'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service: wherefore he at once
With indignation turn'd himself away,
And with the food of pride sustain'd his soul
In solitude. Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the sand-lark, restless bird,
Piping along the margin of the lake.
And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour

A morbid pleasure nourish'd, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier,—and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor that time
When Nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those beings, to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,
The world, and man himself, appear'd a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh
With mournful joy, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye stream'd with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warn'd; and know, that pride,
Howe'er disguised in his own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever. Oh, be wiser, thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
Whom every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That make the path before him always bright;
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;

Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doom'd to go in company with pain,
And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives;
By objects which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, render'd more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He fixes good on good alone, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows;
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be call'd upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has join'd
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And through the heat of conflict keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,

Is yet a soul whose master bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:
'Tis, finally, the man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,
Or left unthought of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won;
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpass'd:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must go to dust without his fame,
And leave a dead, unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy warrior; this is he
Whom every man in arms should wish to be.

ROB ROY'S GRAVE.

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known. His grave is near the head of Loch Katrine, in one of those small pinfold-like burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A FAMOUS man is Robin Hood,
The English ballad-singer's joy!
And Scotland has a thief as good,
An outlaw of as daring mood;
She has her brave Rob Roy!
Then clear the weeds from off his grave,
And let us chant a passing stave
In honour of that hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart,
And wondrous length and strength of arm;
Nor craved he more to quell his foes,
Or keep his friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as *wise* as brave;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong;—
A poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave:
As wise in thought as bold in deed:
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, "What need of books?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves;
They stir us up against our kind;
And worse, against ourselves.

"We have a passion, make a law,
Too false to guide us or control!
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

"And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few:
These find I graven on my heart:
That tells me what to do.

"The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind!
With them no strife can last: they live
In peace, and peace of mind.

"For why?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

"A lesson which is quickly learn'd,
A signal this which all can see!
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty.

"All freakishness of mind is check'd;
He tamed, who foolishly aspires:
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

"All kinds and creatures stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit:
'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.

"Since, then, the rule of right is plain,
And longest life is but a day;
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
I'll take the shortest way."

And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer's heat and winter's snow;
The eagle, he was lord above,
And Rob was lord below.

So was it—*would*, at least, have been
But through untowardness of fate;
For polity was then too strong;
He came an age too late.

Or shall we say an age too soon?
For, were the bold man living *now*,
How might he flourish in his pride,
With buds on every bough?

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains,
Would all have seem'd but paltry things,
Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never linger'd here,
To these few meagre vales confined;
But thought how wide the world, the times
How fairly to his mind.

And to his sword he would have said,
"Do thou my sovereign will enact
From land to land through half the earth!
Judge thou of law and fact!

"'Tis fit that we should do our part;
Becoming, that mankind should learn
That we are not to be surpass'd
In fatherly concern.

"Of old things all are over old,
Of good things none are good enough;
We 'll shew that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.

"I, too, will have my kings that take
From me the sign of life and death:
Kingdoms shall shift about like clouds,
Obedient to my breath."

And if the word had been fulfill'd,
As *might* have been, then, thought of joy!
France would have had her present boast,
And we our brave Rob Roy!

Oh! say not so; compare them not;
I would not wrong thee, champion brave!
Would wrong thee nowhere; least of all
Here standing by thy grave.

For thou, although with some wild thoughts
Wild chieftain of a savage clan!
Hadst this to boast of—thou didst love
The *liberty* of man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thou wouldst have nobly stirr'd thyself,
And battled for the right.

For thou wert still the poor man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand!
And all the oppress'd who wanted strength,
Had thine at their command.

Bear witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's heights,
And by Loch Lomond's braes!

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same;
And kindle, like a fire new stirr'd,
At sound of Rob Roy's name.

A POET'S EPITAPH.

ART thou a statesman, in the van
Of public business train'd and bred?
First learn to love one living man!
Then mayst thou think upon the dead.

A lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh;
Go, carry to some other place
The hardness of thy coward eye,
The falsehood of thy sallow face.

Art thou a man of purple cheer,
A rosy man right plump to see?
Approach; yet, doctor, not too near;
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Art thou a man of gallant pride,
A soldier, and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? One all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanise
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
Oh turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
That abject thing, thy soul, away.

A moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how, to this poor sod;
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubb'd soul can cling,
Nor form, nor feeling, great nor small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual all in all!

Shut close the door, press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is he with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew
Or fountain in a noonday grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has view'd;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak, both man and boy,
Hath been an idler in the land:
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

Come hither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length,
Or build thy house upon this grave.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

"Why, William, on that old gray stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,

Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light bequeath'd
To beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your mother earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old gray stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED;

AN EVENING SCENE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?
Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double.

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,

How sweet his music! on my life
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:
We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art;
Close up these barren leaves:
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

TO THE SONS OF BURNS, AFTER VISITING THEIR FATHER'S GRAVE.

(AUGUST 14, 1803.)

YE now are panting up life's hill!
'Tis twilight time of good and ill,
And more than common strength and skill
Must ye display,
If ye would give the better will
Its lawful sway.

Strong-bodied if ye be to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware!
But if your father's wit ye share,
Then, then, indeed,
Ye sons of Burns! for watchful care
There will be need.

For honest men delight will take
To shew you favour for his sake,

Will flatter you; and fool and rake
Your steps pursue:
And of your father's name will make
A snare for you.

Let no mean hope your souls enslave;
Be independent, generous, brave!
Your father such example gave,
And such revere!
But be admonish'd by his grave,—
And think, and fear!

TO THE SPADE OF A FRIEND.

(AN AGRICULTURIST.)

COMPOSED WHILE WE WERE LABOURING TOGETHER IN HIS PLEASURE-GROUND.

SPADE! with which Wilkinson hath till'd his lands,
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont's side,
Thou art a tool of honour in my hands:
I press thee through the yielding soil with pride.

Rare master has it been thy lot to know;
Long hast thou served a man to reason true;
Whose life combines the best of high and low,
The toiling many and the resting few;

Health, quiet, meekness, ardour, hope secure,
And industry of body and of mind;
And elegant enjoyments, that are pure
As Nature is—too pure to be refined.

Here often hast thou heard the Poet sing
In concord with his river murmuring by;
Or in some silent field, while timid spring
Is yet uncheer'd by other minstrelsy.

Who shall inherit thee when death has laid
Low in the darksome cell thine own dear lord?
That man will have a trophy, humble spade—
A trophy nobler than a conqueror's sword!

If he be one that feels, with skill to part
False praise from true, or greater from the less,
Thee will he welcome to his hand and heart,
Thou monument of peaceful happiness!

With thee he will not dread a toilsome day,
His powerful servant, his inspiring mate!

And when thou art past service, worn away,
Thee a surviving soul shall consecrate.

His thrift thy uselessness will never scorn;
An *heir-loom* in his cottage wilt thou be:
High will he hang thee up, and will adorn
His rustic chimney with the last of thee!

WRITTEN IN GERMANY,

ON ONE OF THE COLDEST DAYS OF THE CENTURY.

I must apprise the reader that the stoves in North Germany generally have the impression of a galloping horse upon them, this being part of the Brunswick arms.

A FIG for your languages, German and Norse!
Let me have the song of the kettle;
And the tongs and the poker, instead of that horse
That gallops away with such fury and force
On this dreary dull plate of black metal.

Our earth is no doubt made of excellent stuff;
But her pulses beat slower and slower:
The weather in 'forty was cutting and rough,
And then, as Heaven knows, the glass stood low enough;
And *now* it is four degrees lower.

Here 's a fly,—a disconsolate creature! perhaps
A child of the field or the grove;
And, sorrow for him! this dull treacherous heat
Has seduced the poor fool from his winter retreat,
And he creeps to the edge of my stove.

Alas! how he fumbles about the domains
Which this comfortless oven environ!
He cannot find out in what track he must crawl,
Now back to the tiles, and now back to the wall,
And now on the brink of the iron.

Stock-still there he stands like a traveller bemazed;
The best of his skill he has tried;
His feelers methinks I can see him put forth
To the east and the west, and the south and the north;
But he finds neither guide-post nor guide.

See his spindles sink under him, foot, leg, and thigh;
His eyesight and hearing are lost;
Between life and death his blood freezes and thaws;
And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky gauze
Are glued to his sides by the frost.

No brother, no friend has he near him—while I
Can draw warmth from the cheek of my love;
As blest and as glad in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above.

Yet, God is my witness, thou small helpless thing!
Thy life I would gladly sustain
Till summer comes up from the south, and with crowds
Of thy brethren a march thou shouldst sound through the clouds
And back to the forests again!

LINES

WRITTEN AT A SMALL DISTANCE FROM MY HOUSE, AND SENT BY MY LITTLE BOY TO THE PERSON TO WHOM THEY WERE ADDRESSED.

It is the first mild day of March,
Each minute sweeter than before;
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you; and pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than fifty years of reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts may make,
Which they shall long obey;
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book; for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

TO A YOUNG LADY,

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

Dear child of nature, let them rail!
There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold,
Where thou, a wife and friend, shalt see
Thy own delightful days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd-boy,
As if thy heritage were joy,
And pleasure were thy trade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt shew us how divine a thing
A woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when gray hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

LINES

WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd;
Their thoughts I cannot measure;
But the least motion which they made,
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If I these thoughts may not prevent,
If such be of my creed the plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

SIMON LEE, THE OLD HUNTSMAN.

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor Hall,
An old man dwells, a little man—
I 've heard he once was tall.
Of years he has upon his back,
No doubt, a burthen weighty;
He says he is threescore and ten,
But others say he 's eighty.

A long blue livery coat has he,
That 's fair behind, and fair before;
Yet, meet him where you will, you see
At once that he is poor.
Full five-and-twenty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And though he has but one eye left,
His cheek is like a cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And no man was so full of glee;
To say the least, four counties round
Had heard of Simon Lee.

His master's dead, and no one now
Dwells in the hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean, and he is sick,
His dwindled body's half awry;
His ankles, too, are swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
When he was young he little knew
Of husbandry or tillage,
And now is forced to work, though weak—
The weakest in the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often ere the race was done
He reel'd and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

His hunting feats have him bereft
Of his right eye, as you may see;
And then, what limbs those feats have left
To poor old Simon Lee!
He has no son, he has no child;
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.

Old Ruth works out of doors with him,
And does what Simon cannot do;
For she, not over stout of limb,
Is stouter of the two.
And though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
Alas! 'tis very little all
Which they can do between them.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Inclosed when he was stronger;
But what avails the land to them
Which they can till no longer?

Few months of life has he in store,
As he to you will tell,

For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle reader, I perceive
How patiently you 've waited,
And I 'm afraid that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle reader! you would find
A tale in everything.
What more I have to say is short,
I hope you 'll kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you 'll make it.

One summer day I chanced to see
This old man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock totter'd in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have work'd for ever.

"You 're overtask'd, good Simon Lee;
Give me your tool," to him I said;
And at the word, right gladly he
Received my proffer'd aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I sever'd,
At which the poor old man so long
And vainly had endeavour'd.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seem'd to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
I 've heard of hearts unkind kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Has oft'ner left me mourning.

ANDREW JONES.

"I HATE that Andrew Jones! he 'll breed
His children up to waste and pillage:
I wish the press-gang or the drum
Would with its rattling music come
And sweep him from the village."

I said not this because he loves
Through the long day to swear and tipple;
But for the poor dear sake of one
To whom a foul deed he has done,
A friendless man, a travelling cripple.

For this poor crawling, helpless wretch
Some horseman, who was passing by,
A penny on the ground had thrown;
But the poor cripple was alone,
And could not stoop—no help was nigh.

Inch-thick the dust lay on the ground,
For it had long been droughty weather:
So with his staff the cripple wrought
Among the dust, till he had brought
The halfpennies together.

It chanced that Andrew pass'd that way
Just at the time; and there he found
The cripple in the mid-day heat
Standing alone, and at his feet
He saw the penny on the ground.

He stoop'd and took the penny up:
And when the cripple nearer drew,
Quoth Andrew: "*Under half a crown,*
What a man finds is all his own;
And so, my friend, good day to you."

And *hence*, I say, that Andrew's boys
Will all be train'd to waste and pillage:
And wish the press-gang or the drum
Would with its rattling music come
And sweep him from the village.

In the school of ——— is a tablet, on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the names of the several persons who have been schoolmasters there since the foundation of the school, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite one of those names the Author wrote the following lines:—

If Nature, for a favourite child
In thee hath temper'd so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

When through this little wreck of fame—
Cipher and syllable—thine eye
Has travell'd down to Matthew's name,
Pause, with no common sympathy.

And if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither check'd nor stay'd:
For Matthew a request I make,
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew—all his frolics o'er—
Is silent as a standing pool;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seem'd as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound.

Thou soul of God's best earthly mould!
Thou happy soul! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee?

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS.

We walk'd along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopp'd, he look'd, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering gray;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the streaming rills,
We travell'd merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun;
Then from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop,
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply:—

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this, which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

"With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, coming to the church, stopp'd short
Beside my daughter's grave.

"Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang; she would have been
A very nightingale!

"Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seem'd, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

"And turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

"A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white:
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

"No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripp'd with foot so free;
She seem'd as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

"There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I look'd at her, and look'd again,
And did not wish her mine."

Matthew is in his grave; yet now,
Methinks I see him stand
As at that moment, with his bough
Of wilding in his hand.

THE FOUNTAIN.

A CONVERSATION.

We talk'd with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true;
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew! let us try to match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old Border song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon.

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old man replied,
The gray-hair'd man of glee:—

"Down to the vale this water steers;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay;
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird in the summer trees,
The lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife: they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free;

"But we are press'd by heavy laws,
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there is one who need bemoan,
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasp'd my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side,
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide,
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's Rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewilder'd chimes.

LINES

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING.

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream:
A little moment past so smiling!
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow!

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS.

WRITTEN UPON THE THAMES, NEAR RICHMOND.

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.
Oh glide, fair stream, for ever so!
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow,
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought! Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the poet bless,
Who, murm'ring here a later* ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar,
And pray that never child of song
May know that poet's sorrows more.
How calm—how still! the only sound
The dripping of the oar suspended!
The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest powers attended.

PERSONAL TALK.

I.

I AM not one who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours daily, weekly, in my sight:

* Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his lifetime. This Ode is also alluded to in another stanza.

And for my chance acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk;
These all wear out of me, like forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whisp'ring its faint undersong.

II.

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee,
Are foster'd by the comment and the gibe."
E'en be it so; yet still, among your tribe,
Our daily world's true worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet
And part far from them: sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet.
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a slave—the meanest we can meet!

III.

Wings have we—and as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which, with the lofty, sanctifies the low;
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There do I find a never-failing store
Of personal themes, and such as I love best:
Matter wherein right voluble I am:
Two will I mention dearer than the rest:
The gentle lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una, with her milk-white lamb.

IV.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:

And thus, from day to day, my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares,
The poets—who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be number'd among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

INCIDENT

CHARACTERISTIC OF A FAVOURITE DOG.

On his morning rounds the master
Goes, to learn how all things fare;
Searches pasture after pasture,
Sheep and cattle eyes with care;
And, for silence or for talk,
He hath comrades in his walk;
Four dogs, each pair of different breed,
Distinguish'd, two for scent, and two for speed.

See, a hare before him started!—
Off they fly in earnest chase;
Every dog is eager-hearted,
All the four are in the race;
And the hare which they pursue,
Hath an instinct what to do:
Her hope is near: no turn she makes,
But, like an arrow, to the river takes.

Deep the river was, and crusted
Thinly by a one night's frost;
But the nimble hare hath trusted
To the ice, and safely cross'd;
She hath cross'd, and without heed
They are following at full speed,
When lo! the ice so thinly spread,
Breaks—and the greyhound, Dart, is over-head.

Better fate have Prince and Swallow—
See them cleaving to the sport!
Music has no heart to follow—
Little Music she stops short.
She hath neither wish nor heart,
Hers is now another part:
A loving creature she and brave!
And fondly strives her struggling friend to save.

From the brink her paws she stretches,
Very hands as you would say!
And afflicting moans she fetches,
As he breaks the ice away.
For herself she hath no fears,—
Him alone she sees and hears,—
Makes efforts and complainings; nor gives o'er
Until her fellow sinks, and reappears no more.

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF THE SAME DOG.

LIE here sequester'd: be this little mound
For ever thine, and be it holy ground!
Lie here, without a record of thy worth,
Beneath the covering of the common earth!
It is not from unwillingness to praise,
Or want of love, that here no stone we raise:
More thou deserv'st; but *this* man gives to man,
Brother to brother, *this* is all we can,
Yet they to whom thy virtues made thee dear
Shall find thee through all changes of the year:
This oak points out thy grave; the silent tree
Will gladly stand a monument of thee.

I pray'd for thee, and that thy end were past;
And willingly have laid thee here at last:
For thou hadst lived, till everything that cheers
In thee had yielded to the weight of years;
Extreme old age had wasted thee away;
And left thee but a glimmering of the day;
Thy ears were deaf, and feeble were thy knees,—
I saw thee stagger in the summer breeze,
Too weak to stand against its sportive breath,
And ready for the gentlest stroke of death.
It came, and we were glad; yet tears were shed:
Both man and woman wept when thou wert dead;
Not only for a thousand thoughts that were
Old household thoughts, in which thou hadst thy share,
But for some precious boons vouchsafed to thee,
Found scarcely anywhere in like degree.
For love, that comes to all—the holy sense,
Best gift of God, in thee was most intense:
A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
Not only to us men, but to thy kind:
Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
The soul of love, love's intellectual law:

Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame;
Our tears from passion and from reason came,
And therefore shalt thou be an honour'd name!

THE FORCE OF PRAYER; OR, THE FOUNDLING OF BOLTON PRIORY.

A TRADITION.

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
With these dark words begins my tale;
And their meaning is, "Whence can comfort spring,
When prayer is of no avail?"

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
The falconer to the lady said;
And she made answer, "Endless sorrow!"
For she knew that her son was dead.

She knew it by the falconer's words,
And from the look of the falconer's eye;
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

Young Romilly through Barden Woods
Is ranging high and low;
And holds a greyhound in a leash,
To let slip upon buck or doe.

And the pair have reach'd that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride!
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

This striding-place is call'd "The Strid,"
A name which it took of yore:
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come,
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across "The Strid?"

He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
That the river was strong, and the rocks were steep!
But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
And check'd him in his leap.

The boy is in the arms of Wharf,
And strangled by a merciless force;
For never more was young Romilly seen
Till he rose a lifeless corse.

Now there is stillness in the vale,
And long unspeaking sorrow:
Wharf shall be, to pitying hearts,
A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a lover the lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of death;
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a farther-looking hope,
And hers is a mother's sorrow.

He was a tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branches wave;
And the root of this delightful tree
Was in her husband's grave!

Long, long in darkness did she sit,
And her first words were, "Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately priory!"

The stately priory was rear'd,
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To matins join'd a mournful voice,
Nor fail'd at evensong.

And the lady pray'd in heaviness
That look'd not for relief:
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn and ask
Of Him to be our friend!

FIDELITY.

A BARKING sound the shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts and searches with his eyes
Among the scatter'd rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen
Glancing from that covert green,

The dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:
Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear—
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps till June December's snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn * below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere;
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams: and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past,
But that enormous barrier binds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The shepherd stood; then makes his way
Towards the dog, o'er rocks and stones,
As quickly as he may;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground;
The appall'd discoverer with a sigh
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear:
He instantly recall'd the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;
Remember'd, too, the very day
On which the traveller pass'd this way.

But hear a wonder, for whose sake
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.

* "Tarn" is a small mere or lake, mostly high up in the mountains.

The dog, which still was hovering nigh,
Repeating the same timid cry,
This dog had been through three months' space
A dweller in that savage place.

Yes, proof was plain that since the day
On which the traveller thus had died
The dog had watch'd about the spot,
Or by his master's side:
How nourish'd here through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime,
And gave that strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate.

ODE TO DUTY.

Stern daughter of the voice of God!
O duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
May joy be theirs while life shall last!
And thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast!

Serene will be our days, and bright
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And blest are they who in the main
This faith, even now, do entertain:
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet find that other strength, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried,
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust;
Full oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferr'd
The task imposed, from day to day;

But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.
Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought;
Me this uncharter'd freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose which ever is the same.

Stern lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh! let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And, in the light of truth, thy bondman let me live!

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

PREFATORY SONNET.

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest peak of Furness Fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth, the prison unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground:
Pleased if some souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find short solace there, as I have found.

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.

Praised be the art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopp'd that band of travellers on their way
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And shew'd the bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchor'd in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing art! which morning, noontide, even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry!
Thou, with ambition modest, yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment, caught from fleeting time,
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

The fairest, brightest hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
O friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;

Such strains of rapture as* the genius play'd
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;
He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
Never before to human sight betray'd.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary arches are not there,
Nor the green islands, nor the shining seas;
Yet sacred is to me this mountain's head,
From which I have been lifted on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

"Weak is the will of man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and hope betrays;
Heavy is woe; and joy, for human kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!"
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assign'd
To elevate the more than reasoning mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined:
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

Hail, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art thou as undiscerning Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions. Ancient power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Look'd ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The selfsame vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy power, brought forth;
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between;
The floods—the stars; a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

The shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
"Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!"
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread,
And penetrated all with tender light,

* See the "Vision of Mirza" in the *Spectator*.

She cast away, and shew'd her fulgent head
Uncover'd; dazzling the beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparagèd.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, dark'ning as it went;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approach'd this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured; content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in flocks;
And wild rose tiptoe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like to a bonny lass who plays her pranks
At wakes and fairs with wandering mountebanks,—
When she stands cresting the clown's head, and mocks
The crowd beneath her. Verily, I think,
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

Where lies the land to which yon ship must go?
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
As vigorous as a lark at break of day:
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry? Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like pilgrims here and there
Crossing the waters,) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous bark!

Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Sullenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon taper 'mid its black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:

The lake below reflects it not; the sky,
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet round the body of that joyless thing,
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society, with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing; or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

Mark the concentred hazels that enclose
Yon old gray stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns: and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof—amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a tomb,
In which some ancient chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains. Live, ye trees!
And thou, gray stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the mighty sleep:
For more than fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMILTON HILLS, YORKSHIRE.

Dark, and more dark, the shades of evening fell;
The wish'd-for point was reach'd—but late the hour;
And little could we see of all that power
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
The western sky did recompense us well
With Grecian temple, minaret, and bower;
And, in one part, a minster with its tower
Substantially express'd—a place for bell
Or clock to toll from! Many a glorious pile
Did we behold, fair sights that might repay
All disappointment! and, as such, the eye
Delighted in them: but we felt, the while,
We should forget them: they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

"They are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away."

These words were utter'd in a pensive mood,
Mine eyes yet lingering on that solemn sight;

A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily woo'd!
But now upon this thought I cannot brood:
It is unstable, and deserts me quite:
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging man's gifts, and proper food.
The grove, the sky-built temple, and the dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.

COMPOSED AT —— CASTLE.

Degenerate Douglas! oh, th' unworthy lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggar'd and outraged! Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old trees; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For shelter'd places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

TO THE POET JOHN DYER.

Bard of the "Fleece," whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape, fair and bright;
Nor hallow'd less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood stray'd,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, "deep embay'd,
By green hills fenced, by ocean's murmur lull'd;"
Though hasty fame hath many a chaplet cull'd
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest lay
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill.

TO SLEEP.

O GENTLE Sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vex'd with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience—no;
Hence I am cross and peevish as a child:
And pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled!

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds, and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky,
I 've thought of all by turns; and still I lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first utter'd from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessèd barrier betwixt day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

TO SLEEP.

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest words that fancy frames
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear bosom child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; balm that tames
All anguish; saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone—
I, surely not a man ungently made—
Call thee worst tyrant by which flesh is cross'd?

Perverse, self-will'd to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee pray'd,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it show'd;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
"Her tackling rich, and of apparel high."
This ship was naught to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a lover's look;
This ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
On went she,—and due north her journey took.

TO THE RIVER DUDDON.

O mountain stream! the shepherd and his cot
Are privileged inmates of deep solitude:
Nor would the nicest anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine: thou hast view'd
These only, Duddon! with their paths renew'd
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
Thee hath some awful spirit impell'd to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
Though simple thy companions were and few;
And through this wilderness a passage cleave,
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

Yes! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetray'd;
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.

His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour:
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

FROM THE SAME.

TO THE SUPREME BEING.

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where Thou say'st it may.
Unless Thou shew to us Thine own true way,
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.

FROM THE SAME.

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
Which kills the soul: Love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

TO THE LADY BEAUMONT.

LADY! the songs of spring were in the grove
While I was framing beds for winter flowers;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs to hang upon the warm alcove

And sheltering wall; and still, as fancy wove
The dream, to time and Nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, lady, which your feet shall rove.
Yet! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness, you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bears her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything we are out of tune;
It moves us not. Great God! I 'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH.

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couch'd upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hush'd, am I at rest. My friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh, leave me to myself! nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3, 1803.

EARTH has not anything to shew more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by

A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enroll'd;
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
And that inspiring hill, which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English mountain we behold
By the celestial muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
What was the great Parnassus' self to thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British hill is fairer far; he shrouds
His double-fronted head in higher clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

Brook! whose society the poet seeks
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks;
If I some type of thee did wish to view,
Thee,—and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad shouldst thou be,
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints, nor hairs;
It seems the eternal soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestow'd on thee a better good—
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

ADMONITION,

INTENDED MORE PARTICULARLY FOR THE PERUSAL OF THOSE WHO MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO BE ENAMOURED OF SOME BEAUTIFUL PLACE OF RETREAT IN THE COUNTRY OF THE LAKES.

YES, there is holy pleasure in thine eye!
The lovely cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirr'd thee deeply: with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the abode—oh, do not sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Sighing a wish to tear from Nature's book
This blissful leaf with harsh impiety.
Think what the home would be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants! Roof, window, door,
The very flowers, are sacred to the poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touch'd, would melt, and melt away!

"BELOVED Vale!" I said, "when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down; to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
But when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distress'd me; I look'd round, I shed no tears;
Deep thought, or awful vision, I had none.
By thousand petty fancies I was cross'd,
To see the trees, which I had thought so tall,
Mere dwarfs; the brooks so narrow, fields so small,
A juggler's balls old Time about him toss'd;
I look'd, I stared, I smiled, I laugh'd; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud—
Nor view of who might sit thereon allow'd;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
"Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan."
I seem'd to mount those steps; the vapours gave
Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,

With her face up to heaven; that seem'd to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely beauty in a summer grave! *

Surprised by joy—impatient as the wind
I wish'd to share the transport—oh, with whom
But thee, long buried in the silent tomb!
That spot which no vicissitude can find.
Love, faithful love recall'd thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee?—Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss? That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn,
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea:
Listen! the mighty being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder everlastingly.
Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear'st untouch'd by solemn thought,
Thy nature therefore is not less divine:
Thou liest "in Abraham's bosom" all the year;
And worshipp'st at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND, IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE.

What need of clamorous bells, or ribbons gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace?
Angels of love, look down upon the place,
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day!
Even for such omen would the bride display
No mirthful gladness. Serious is her face,
Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way

* Prophetic of the death of the Princess Charlotte.

Will thank you. Faultless does the maid appear,
No disproportion in her soul, no strife:
But when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shewn that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the wife
To her indulgent lord become more dear.

ON APPROACHING HOME AFTER A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803.

Fly, some kind spirit, fly to Grasmere Vale!
Say that we come, and come by this day's light;
Glad tidings!—spread them over field and height;
But chiefly let one cottage hear the tale;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The kitten frolic with unruly might,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near approaching good that shall not fail;—
And from that infant's face let joy appear;
Yea, let our Mary's one companion child,
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wander'd over wood and wild,
Smile on his mother now with bolder cheer.

From the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, ——, rise; the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a wingèd steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a high guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heav'nward they direct. Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's fading grove:
A cheerful life is what the muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT.

Calvert! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem:
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray

Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth,
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse,—or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood which now I meditate,—
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

Fair star of evening, splendour of the west,
Star of my country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the nations. Thou, I think,
Shouldst be my country's emblem; and shouldst wink,
Bright star, with laughter on her banners, dress'd
In thy fresh beauty. There; that dusky spot
Beneath thee—it is England! there it lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! I with many a fear
For my dear country, many heartfelt sighs,
'Mong men who do not love her, linger here.

CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick, lame, and blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind!
A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown,
What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
Shame on you, feeble heads to slavery prone!

TO A FRIEND.

COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS, ON THE ROAD LEADING TO ARDRES, AUGUST 7, 1807.

JONES! when from Calais southward you and I
Travell'd on foot together, then this way
Which I am pacing now, was like the May
With festivals of new-born Liberty:
A homeless sound of joy was in the sky;
The antiquated earth, as one might say,
Beat like the heart of man: songs, garlands, play,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
"*Good morrow, citizen!*" a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it! Yet despair
I feel not: happy am I as a bird;
Fair seasons yet will come, and hopes as fair.

1801.

I GRIEVED for Buonaparte with a vain
And an unthinking grief! for who aspires
To genuine greatness but from just desires,
And knowledge such as *he* could never gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees,
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

CALAIS, AUGUST 15, 1802.

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not names:
This is young Buonaparte's natal day,
And his is henceforth an establish'd sway.
Consul for life! With worship France proclaims
Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
Heaven grant that other cities may be gay!
Calais is not; and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames

His business as he likes. Another time
That was, when I was here long years ago;
The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
Happy is he, who, caring not for pope,
Consul, or king, can sound himself to know
The destiny of man, and live in hope.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

ONCE did she hold the gorgeous East in fee;
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth—
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty!
She was a maiden city, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reach'd its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great is pass'd away.

THE KING OF SWEDEN.

THE voice of song from distant lands shall call
To that great king; shall hail the crownèd youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand—or fall,
If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend?
And what to him and his shall be the end?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious Swede hath done
The thing which ought to be; he stands *above*
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve:
The heroes bless him—him their rightful son.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the all-cheering sun be free to shed
His beams around thee, or thou rest thy head
Pillow'd in some dark dungeon's noisome den—

O miserable chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee: air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1802.

We had a fellow-passenger who came
From Calais with us, gaudy in array,—
A negro woman like a lady gay,
Yet silent as a woman fearing blame;
Dejected, meek, yea, pitiably tame,
She sat, from notice turning not away,
But on our proffer'd kindness still did lay
A weight of languid speech,—or at the same
Was silent, motionless in eyes and face.
She was a negro woman driven from France,
Rejected like all others of that race,
Not one of whom may now find footing there;
This the poor outcast did to us declare,
Nor murmur'd at the unfeeling ordinance.

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY, NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF LANDING.

Dear fellow-traveller, here we are once more!
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells,—those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing,—and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore,—
All, all are English. Oft have I look'd round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass—
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear companion at my side.

SEPTEMBER, 1802.

Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,

The coast of France,—the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk, for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and power, and deity,
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only the nations shall be great and free.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Two voices are there—one is of the sea,
One of the mountains—each a mighty voice:
In both from age to age, thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven,
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, oh, cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-soul'd maid, what sorrow would it be
That mountain floods should thunder as before,
And ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful voice be heard by thee!

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, oppress'd
To think that now our life is only dress'd
For show: mean handiwork of craftsman, cook,
Or groom! We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now, in Nature or in book,
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON, 1802.

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay.

GREAT MEN have been among us; hands that penn'd
And tongues that utter'd wisdom, better none:
The later Sydney, Marvel, Harington,
Young Vane, and others who call'd Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

IT is not to be thought of that the flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flow'd "with pomp of waters unwithstood"—
Road by which all might come and go that would,
And bear out freights of worth to foreign lands;
That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
Should perish, and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake—the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held. In everything we're sprung
Of earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my country!—am I to be blamed?
But when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
But dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark of the cause of men;
And I, by my affection, was beguiled.
What wonder if a poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child.

OCTOBER, 1803.

One might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for men; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favours; rural works are there;
And ordinary business without care;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please!
How piteous, then, that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite;
Should come in frenzy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of liberty that yet remains on earth!

There is a bondage which is worse to bear
Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall
Pent in, a tyrant's solitary thrall:
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a nation who, henceforth, must wear
Their fetters in their souls. For who could be,
Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach which he must share
With human nature? Never be it ours
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,
And know that noble feelings, manly powers,
Instead of gathering strength must droop and pine,
And earth, with all her pleasant fruits and flowers,
Fade, and participate in man's decline.

OCTOBER, 1803.

THESE times touch money'd worldlings with dismay:
Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
With words of apprehension and despair:
While tens of thousands, thinking on th' affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untill'd are given,
Sound, healthy children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by hope's perpetual breath:
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death?

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou shouldst wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food;
The truth should now be better understood;
Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou wouldst step between.
England, all nations in this charge agree!
But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
Far, far more abject is thine enemy:
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
Oh, grief! that earth's best hopes rest all with thee!

OCTOBER, 1803.

WHEN, looking on the present face of things,
I see one man, of men the meanest too!
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
With mighty nations for his underlings,
The great events with which old story rings
Seem vain and hollow: I find nothing great;
Nothing is left which I can venerate;
So that almost a doubt within me springs
Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!
I measure back the steps which I have trod,
And tremble, seeing as I do, the strength
Of such poor instruments; with thoughts sublime
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

TO THE MEN OF KENT, OCTOBER, 1803.

VANGUARD of liberty, ye men of Kent!
Ye children of a soil that doth advance
Its haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
To France be words of invitation sent!
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath:
Confirm'd the charters that were yours before.
No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
We all are with you now from shore to shore:
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death!

OCTOBER, 1803.

SIX thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killicrankie were array'd
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen. Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thund'ring down his mountain-road,
Was stopp'd, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies. 'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
Oh! for a single hour of that Dundee
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the men of England see:
And her foes find a like inglorious grave.

ANTICIPATION, OCTOBER, 1803.

SHOUT, for a mighty victory is won!
On British ground the invaders are laid low;
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again!—the work is done.
Come forth, ye old men, now, in peaceful show,
And greet your sons! drums beat and trumpets blow!
Make merry, wives! ye little children stun
Your grandam's ears with pleasure of your noise!
Clap, infants, clap your hands! divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,

And e'en the prospect of our brethren slain,
Hath something in it which the heart enjoys:
In glory will they sleep, and endless sanctity.

NOVEMBER, 1806.

ANOTHER year! another deadly blow!
Another mighty empire overthrown!
And we are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dares to struggle with the foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought:
That by our own right hands it must be wrought,
That we must stand unpropp'd, or be laid low.
O dastard, whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a venal band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour, which they do not understand.

SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY.

From 1807 to 1813.

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY.

A Roman master stands on Grecian ground,
And to the concourse of the Isthmian games
He, by his herald's voice, aloud proclaims
"The liberty of Greece:"—the words rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drown'd;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent!
And birds, high flying in the element,
Dropp'd to the earth, astonish'd at the sound!
A melancholy echo of that noise
Doth sometimes hang on musing Fancy's ear;
Ah! that a *conqueror's* words should be so dear;
Ah! that a *boon* could shed such rapturous joys!
A gift of that which is not to be given
By all the blended powers of earth and heaven.

UPON THE SAME EVENT.

When, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn
The tidings pass'd of servitude repeal'd,
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian field,
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter scorn.
"'Tis known," cried they, "that he who would adorn
His envied temples with the Isthmian crown,
Must either win, through effort of his own,
The prize, or be content to see it worn
By more deserving brows. Yet so ye prop,
Sons of the brave who fought at Marathon,
Your feeble spirits. Greece her head hath bow'd,
As if the wreath of liberty thereon
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pelion's top!"

TO THOMAS CLARKSON, ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE, MARCH, 1807.

CLARKSON! it was an obstinate hill to climb:
How toilsome, nay, how dire it was, by thee
Is known—by none, perhaps, so feelingly;
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth this pilgrimage sublime,
Hast heard the constant voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee, O true yoke-fellow of time.
With unabating effort, see, the palm
Is won, and by all nations shall be worn!
The bloody writing is for ever torn,
And thou henceforth shalt have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind!

A PROPHECY, FEBRUARY, 1807.

HIGH deeds, O Germans, are to come from you!
Thus in your books the record shall be found—
"A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound,
ARMINIUS!—all the people quaked like dew
Stirr'd by the breeze—they rose, a nation true,
True to itself—the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
She rose,—and off at once the yoke she threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful trance—
Those new-born kings she wither'd like a flame."
Woe to them all!—but heaviest woe and shame
To that Bavarian who did first advance
His banner in accursèd league with France,
First open traitor to a sacred name!

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT, OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA, 1808.

NOT 'mid the world's vain objects that enslave
The free-born soul,—that world whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave,—
Not there! but in dark wood and rocky cave,
And hollow vale, which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds that never shall be still.
Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime

I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain;
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way,
And look and listen, gathering, where I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE SAME OCCASION.

I DROPP'D my pen, and listen'd to the wind
That sang of trees uptorn and vessels toss'd:
A midnight harmony, and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by chains confined
Of business, care, or pleasure, or resign'd
To timely sleep. Thought I, th' impassion'd strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
Like acceptation from the world will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past,
And to the attendant promise will give heed,
The prophecy, like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.

HOFFER.

OF mortal parents is the hero born
By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led?
Or is it Tell's great spirit, from the dead
Return'd, to animate an age forlorn?
He comes like Phœbus through the gates of morn,
When dreary darkness is discomfited:
Yet mark his modest state!—upon his head,
That simple crest—a heron's plume—is worn.
O Liberty! they stagger at the shock;
The murd'rers are aghast; they strive to flee,
And half their host is buried:—rock on rock
Descends:—beneath this godlike warrior, see!
Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
The tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

ADVANCE! come forth from thy Tyrolean ground,
Dear Liberty!—stern nymph of soul untamed,
Sweet nymph, oh! rightly of the mountains named!
Through the long chain of Alps, from mound to mound,
And o'er th' eternal snows, like Echo, bound,—
Like Echo, when the hunter-train at dawn
Have roused her from her sleep; and forest lawn,

Cliffs, woods, and caves her viewless steps resound,
And babble of her pastime! On, dread power,
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the herdsman's bower,
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE.

THE land we from our fathers had in trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die,—
This is our maxim, this our piety,
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we *would* perform in arms—we must!
We read the dictate in the infant's eye,
In the wife's smile, and in the placid sky,
And at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us. Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the heart!
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind!
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons in the fearless hand, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

ALAS! what boots the long, laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill,
Or pains abstruse, to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill.
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie depress'd
Beneath the brutal sword? Her haughty schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules
Among the herdsmen of the Alps have wrought
More for mankind, at this unhappy day,
Than all the pride of intellect and thought.

AND is it among rude untutor'd dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah, no! though Nature's dread protection fails,
There is a bulwark in the *soul*. This knew

Iberian burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,
Like him, of noble birth and noble mind;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear;
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which, without industry, they find.

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A godhead, like the universal Pan,
But more exalted, with a brighter train.
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Shower'd equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain?
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it, Heaven!
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death: else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE.

IT was a *moral* end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought?
Nor hath that moral good been *vainly* sought;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left—an impulse—and a claim
Which neither can be overturn'd nor bought.
Sleep, warriors, sleep! among your hills repose!
We know that ye, beneath the stern control
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquish'd soul;
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes,
Europe breaks forth, then, shepherds, shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your enemies.

HAIL, Zaragoza! if with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;
Such spectacle demands nor tear nor sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high

Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue: they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flow'd before thy sight without remorse;
Disease consumed thy vitals; war upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force;
Dread trials! yet encounter'd and sustain'd,
Till not a wreck of help or hope remain'd,
And law was from *necessity* received.

Say, what is honour? 'Tis the finest sense
Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffer'd or done. When lawless violence
A kingdom doth assault, and in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation—whence
Glory—and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endanger'd states may yield to terms unjust,
Stoop their proud heads—but not unto the dust,
A foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil!
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

The martial courage of a day is vain—
An empty noise of death the battle's roar—
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corses: drench'd with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heap'd with slain.
Yet see, the mighty tumult overpast,
Austria a daughter of her throne hath sold!
And her Tyrolean champion we behold
Murder'd like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murder'd without relief. Oh! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast!

Brave Schill! by death deliver'd, take thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes 'mid the Islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou in a darksome night;
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,

Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fix'd as a star: such glory is thy right.
Alas! it may not be: for earthly fame
Is fortune's frail dependant; yet there lives
A judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.

Call not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to fortune bend the knee;
Who slighted fear,—rejected steadfastly
Temptation; and whose kingly name and state
Have "perish'd by his choice, and not his fate!"
Hence lives he, to his inner self endear'd;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven ordain
That this great servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts t' endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonish'd by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.

Look now on that adventurer* who hath paid
His vows to fortune; who, in cruel slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath follow'd wheresoe'er a way was made
By the blind goddess—ruthless, undismay'd;
And so hath gain'd at length a prosperous height,
Round which the elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force!
Curses are *his* dire portion, scorn and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

Is there a power that can sustain and cheer
The captive chieftain—by a tyrant's doom
Forced to descend alive into his tomb,
A dungeon dark!—where he must waste the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear;

* The fall of Buonaparte

What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate valour and the rage
Of righteous vengeance side by side appear,—
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise:
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters? Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

Ah! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallow'd up—remote from ken
Of pitying human nature? Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, champion brave,
Redeem'd to baffle that imperial slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy country triumphs! Smilingly
Th' Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like His own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

In due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful corse in vestments white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:
This done, a festal company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted cross
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne
Uncover'd to his grave. Her piteous loss
The lonesome mother cannot choose but mourn;
Yet soon by Christian faith is grief subdued,
And joy attends upon her fortitude.

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF THESE FUNERALS. 1810.

Yet, yet Biscayans, we must meet our foes
With firmer soul,—yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom; else 'twere worse than vain
To gather round the bier these festal shows!

A garland fashion'd of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave:
Oh! bear the infant cover'd to his grave!
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good!
The awful light of heavenly innocence
Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

THE OAK OF GUERNICA.

The ancient Oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his Account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1476, after hearing mass in the Church of Santa Marie de la Antigua, repaired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain their *fueros*, (privileges.) What other interest belongs to it in the minds of this people will appear from the following

SUPPOSED ADDRESS OF THE SAME. 1810.

Oak of Guernica! tree of holier power
Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
(So faith too fondly deem'd) a voice divine,
Heard from the depths of its aërial bower,
How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
Or the soft breezes from th' Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
Which would extend thy branches on the ground,
If never more within their shady round
Those lofty-minded lawgivers shall meet,
Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED SPANIARD.

We can endure that he should waste our lands,
Despoil our temples,—and by sword and flame
Return us to the dust from which we came;
Such food a tyrant's appetite demands:
And we can brook the thought that by his hands
Spain may be o'erpower'd, and he possess,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness,
Where all the brave lie dead. But when of bands,
Which he will break for us, he dares to speak,—
Of benefits, and of a future day
When our enlighten'd minds shall bless his sway,

Then, the strain'd heart of fortitude proves weak:
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
That he has power t' inflict what we lack strength to bear.

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!
I better like a blunt indifference
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight:—and be there join'd
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,—
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve;
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind;
And piety towards God.—Such men of old
Were England's native growth; and throughout Spain
Forests of such do at this day remain;
Then for that country let our hopes be bold;
For match'd with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

1810.

O'ERWEENING statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth:
But from *within* proceeds a nation's health;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride
To the paternal floor; or turn aside,
In the throng'd city, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A soul by contemplation sanctified.
There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood:
Who to their country's cause have bound a life,
Erewhile by solemn consecration given
To labour and to prayer, to Nature and to Heaven.*

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERILLAS.

HUNGER, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height,
These hardships ill sustain'd, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish bands are reach'd at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam:—but as a flight

* See Laborde's character of the Spanish people; from him the sentiment of these two last lines is taken.

Of scatter'd quails by signs do reunite,
So these,—and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long-practised art
And newly-kindled hope; but they are fled,
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead;
Where now?—Their sword is at the foeman's heart!
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.

SPANISH GUERILLAS. 1811.

THEY seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
Shrink not, though far out-number'd by their foes:
For they have learn'd to open and to close
The ridges of grim war; and at their head
Are captains such as erst their country bred
Or foster'd, self-supported chiefs,—like those
Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose,
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.
In one who lived unknown a shepherd's life
Redoubted Viriatus breathes again;
And Mina, nourish'd in the studious shade,
With that great leader vies, who, sick of strife
And bloodshed, long'd in quiet to be laid
In some green island of the western main.

1811.

THE power of armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and place;
But who the limits of that power can trace
Which a brave people into light can bring
Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating,
By just revenge inflamed? No foot can chase,
No eye can follow to a *fatal* place,
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves. From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtile element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

1811.

HERE pause; the Poet claims at least this praise
That virtuous liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope

In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount *duty* that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart,
That an *accursed* thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor, touch'd with due abhorrence of *their* guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity,
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

NOVEMBER, 1813.

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,
Our aged Sovereign sits to the ebb and flow
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe,
Insensible; he sits deprived of sight,
And lamentably wrapp'd in twofold night,
Whom no weak hopes deceived; whose mind ensued,
Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
Peace that should claim respect from lawless might.
Dread King of kings, vouchsafe a ray divine
To his forlorn condition! let thy grace
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine;
Permit his heart to kindle, and embrace
(Though were it only for a moment's space)
The triumphs of this hour; for they are THINE!

THANKSGIVING ODES.

ODE

FOR THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL THANKSGIVING, JANUARY 18, 1816.

HAIL, universal source of pure delight!
Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude
On hearts howe'er insensible or rude;
Whether thy orient visitations smite
The haughty towers where monarchs dwell;
Or thou, impartial sun, with presence bright
Cheer'st the low threshold of the peasant's cell.
Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky
In naked splendour, clear from mist or haze,
Or cloud approaching to divert the rays
Which, even in deepest winter, testify
Thy power and majesty,
Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.
Well does thine aspect usher in this day;
As aptly suits therewith that timid pace,
Framed in subjection to the chains
That bind thee to the path which God ordains
That thou shalt trace,
Till, with the heavens and earth, thou pass away!
Nor less the stillness of these frosty plains—
Their utter stillness,—and the silent grace
Of yon ethereal summits white with snow,
Whose tranquil pomp, and spotless purity
Report of storms gone by
To us who tread below,
Do with the service of the day accord.
Divinest object which the uplifted eye
Of mortal man is suffer'd to behold;
Thou who upon yon snow-clad heights hast pour'd
Meek splendour, nor forgot'st the humble vale,
Thou who dost warm earth's universal mould,
And for thy beauty were not unadored
By pious men of old;
Once more, heart-cheering sun, I bid thee hail!
Bright be thy course to-day; let not this promise fail!

'Mid the deep quiet of this morning hour,
All nature seems to hear me while I speak,
By feelings urged, that do not vainly seek
Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
That stream in blithe succession from the throats
Of birds in leafy bower,
Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower.
There is a radiant but a short-lived flame,
That burns for poets in the dawning east,—
And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,
When the captivity of sleep had ceased;
But He who fix'd immovably the frame
Of the round world, and built, by laws as strong,
A solid refuge for distress,
The towers of righteousness;
He knows that from a holier altar came
The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice—
Knows that the source is nobler whence doth rise
The current of this matin song,
That deeper far it lies
Than aught dependent on the fickle skies.

Have we not conquer'd? By the vengeful sword?
Ah, no!—by dint of magnanimity;
That curb'd the baser passions, and left free
A loyal band to follow their liege lord,
Close-sighted Honour, and his staid compeers,
Along a track of most unnatural years,
In execution of heroic deeds,
Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
Of morning dew upon the untrodden meads,
Shall live enroll'd above the starry spheres!
Who to the murmurs of an earthly string
Of Britain's acts would sing,
He with enraptured voice will tell
Of one whose spirit no reverse could quell:
Of one that 'mid the failing never fail'd.
Who paints how Britain struggled and prevail'd,
Shall represent her labouring with an eye
Of circumspect humanity;
Shall shew her clothed with strength and skill,
All martial duties to fulfil;
Firm as a rock in stationary flight;
In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
Fierce as a flood-gate bursting in the night
To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream—
Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!
Appall'd she may not be, and cannot yield.

And thus is miss'd the sole true glory

That can belong to human story!
At which *they* only shall arrive
Who through the abyss of weakness dive.
The very humblest are too proud of heart:
And one brief day is rightly set apart
To Him who lifteth up and layeth low,
For that Almighty God to whom we owe—
Say not, that we have vanquish'd—but that we survive.

How dreadful the dominion of the impure!
Why should the song be tardy to proclaim
That less than power unbounded could not tam
That soul of evil, which, from hell let loose,
Had fill'd the astonish'd world with such abuse
As boundless patience only could endure?
Wide-wasted regions—cities wrapp'd in flame-
Who sees, and feels, may lift a streaming eye
To Heaven,—who never saw may heave a sigh.
But the foundation of our nature shakes,
And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
When desolated countries, towns on fire,
Are but the avow'd attire
Of warfare urged with desperate mind
Against the life of virtue in mankind;
Assaulting without ruth
The citadels of truth;
While the old forest of civility
Is doom'd to perish, to the last fair tree.
A crushing purpose, a distracted will,
Opposed to hopes that batten'd upon scorn,
And to desires, whose ever-waxing horn
Not all the light of earthly power could fill;
Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient skill,
And the celerities of inward force
Which, spurning God, had flung away remorse,
What could they gain but shadows of redress?
So bad proceeded, propagating worse;
And discipline was passion's dire excess.
Widens the fatal web—its lines extend,
And deadliest poisons in the chalice blend:
When will your trials teach you to be wise,
O prostrate lands?—consult your agonies!

No more—the guilt is banish'd,
And with the guilt the shame is fled,
And with the guilt and shame the woe hath vanish'd;
Shaking the dust and ashes from her head!
No more these lingerings of distress
Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.
What robe can Gratitude employ

So seemly as the radiant vest of Joy?
What steps so suitable as those that move
In prompt obedience to spontaneous measures
Of glory, and felicity, and love,
Surrendering the whole heart to sacred pleasures?

Land of our father's! precious unto me
Since the first joys of thinking infancy;
When of thy gallant chivalry I read,
And hugg'd the volume on my sleepless bed!
O England! dearer far than life is dear,
If I forget thy prowess, never more
Be thy ungrateful son allow'd to hear
Thy green leaves rustle, or thy torrents roar.
But how can he be faithless to the past
Whose soul, intolerant of base decline,
Saw in thy virtue a celestial sign,
That bade him hope, and to his hope cleave fast!
The nations strove with puissance; at length
Wide Europe heaved, impatient to be cast
With *all* her living strength,
With *all* her armèd powers,
Upon the offensive shores.
The trumpet blew a universal blast!
But thou art foremost in the field; there stand—
Receive the triumph destined to thy hand!
All states have glorified themselves; their claims
Are weigh'd by Providence in balance even;
And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
To thee the extirpating sword is given.
Dread mark of approbation, justly gain'd!
Exalted office, worthily sustain'd!

Imagination ne'er before content,
But aye ascending, restless in her pride;
From all that man's performance could present
Stoops to that closing deed magnificent,
And with the embrace is satisfied.
Fly, ministers of Fame,
Whate'er your means, whatever help ye claim,
Bear through the world these tidings of delight!
Hours, days, and months have borne them on the sight
Of mortals, travelling faster than the shower
That landward stretches from the sea,
The morning's splendour to devour;
But their appearance scatter'd ecstasy—
And heart-sick Europe bless'd the healing power.
"The shock is given, the adversaries bleed—
Lo, justice triumphs! Earth is freed!"
Such glad assurance suddenly went forth—

It pierced the caverns of the sluggish North;
It found no barrier on the ridge
Of Andes; frozen gulfs became its bridge;
The vast Pacific gladdens with the freight;
Upon the lakes of Asia 'tis bestow'd;
The Arabian desert shapes a willing road
Across her burning breast,
For the refreshing incense from the West!
Where snakes and lions breed,
Where towns and cities thick as stars appear,
Wherever fruits are gather'd, or where'er
The upturn'd soil receives the hopeful seed—
While the sun rules, and 'cross the shades of night
The unwearied arrow hath pursued its flight.
The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,
And in its sparkling progress read
How virtue triumphs, from her bondage freed!
Tyrants exult to hear of kingdoms won,
And slaves are pleased to learn that mighty feats are done!
Even the proud realm, from whose distracted borders
The messenger of good was launch'd in air,
France, conquer'd France—amid her wild disorders
Feels, and hereafter shall the truth declare,
That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,
And utter England's name with sadly-plaintive voice.

Preserve, O Lord! within our hearts
The memory of Thy favour,
That else insensibly departs,
And loses its sweet savour.
Lodge it within us! As the power of light
Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
Fix'd on the front of Eastern diadems,
So shines our thankfulness for ever bright!
What offering, what transcendent monument,
Shall our sincerity to thee present?
Not work of hands, but trophies that may reach
To highest heaven—the labours of the soul;
That builds, as Thy unerring precepts teach,
Upon the inward victories of each,
Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.
Yet, might it well become that city now,
Into whose breast the tides of grandeur flow,
To whom all persecuted men retreat;
If a new temple lift its votive brow
Upon the shores of silver Thames—to greet
The peaceful guest advancing from afar!
Bright to the distant fabric, as a star
Fresh risen—and beautiful within!—there meet

Dependence infinite, proportions just;
A pile that grace approves, and time can trust.
But if the valiant of the land,
In reverential modesty, demand
That all observance due to them be paid
Where their severe progenitors are laid;
Kings, warriors, high-soul'd poets, saint-like sages,
England's illustrious sons of long, long ages;
Be it not unordain'd that solemn rites
Within the circuit of those Gothic walls
Shall be perform'd at pregnant intervals;
Commemoration holy, that unites
The living generation with the dead;
By the deep soul-moving sense
Of religious eloquence,—
By visual pomp, and by the tie
Of sweet and threatening harmony;
Soft notes, awful as the omen
Or destructive tempests coming,
And escaping from that sadness
Into elevated gladness;
While the white-robed choir attendant,
Under mould'ring banners pendant,
Provoke all sympathies to raise
Songs of victory and praise
For them who bravely stood unhurt—or bled
With medicable wounds—or found their graves
Upon the battle-field, or under ocean's waves;
Or were conducted home in single state
And long procession, there to lie,
Where there sons' sons, and all posterity,
Unheard by them, their deeds shall celebrate!
Nor will the God of peace and love
Such martial service disapprove.
He guides the pestilence—the cloud
Of locusts travels on His breath;
The region that in hope was plough'd
His drought consumes, His mildew taints with death,
He springs the hush'd volcano's mine;
He puts the earthquake on her still design;
Darkens the sun; hath bade the forest sink,
And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink
Cities and towns. 'Tis Thou—the work is Thine!
The fierce tornado sleeps within Thy courts—
He hears the word—he flies—
And navies perish in their ports;
For Thou art angry with thine enemies!
For these, and for our errors,
And sins that paint their terrors,

We bow our heads before thee; and we laud
And magnify thy name, Almighty God!
But thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
Is man—array'd for mutual slaughter.
Yea, Carnage is Thy daughter;
Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,
And by Thy just permission they prevail;
Thine arm from peril guards the coasts
Of them who in Thy law delight:
Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight,
Tremendous God of battles! Lord of hosts!

To THEE! to THEE!
On this appointed day shall thanks ascend,
That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end;
And that we need no further victory!
For a brief moment terrible,
But to Thy sovereign penetration fair;
Before whom all things are, that were,
All judgments that have been, or e'er shall be,
Links in the chain of Thy tranquillity!
Along the bosom of this favour'd nation,
Breathe Thou, this day, a vital undulation!
Let all who do this land inherit
Be conscious of Thy moving Spirit!
Oh, 'tis a goodly ordinance! the sight,
Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight;
Bless Thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
And, at one moment, in one spirit, strive
With lip and heart to tell their gratitude
For Thy protecting care,
Their solemn joy—praising the eternal Lord
For tyranny subdued,
And for the sway of equity renew'd,
For liberty confirm'd, and peace restor'd!

But hark, the summons! Down the placid lake
Floats the soft cadence of the church-tower bells,
Bright shines the sun, as if his beams might wake
The tender insects sleeping in their cells;
Bright shines the sun—and not a breeze to shake
The drops that point the melting icicles.
"Oh, enter now His temple gate!"
Inviting words—perchance already flung
(As the crowd press devoutly down the aisle
Of some old minster's venerable pile)
From voices into zealous passion stung,
While the tubed engine feels the inspiring blast,

And has begun its clouds of sound to cast
Towards the empyreal heaven,
As if the fretted roof were riven.
Us humbler ceremonies now await;
But in the bosom with devout respect,
The banner of our joy we will erect,
And strength of love our souls shall elevate:
For, to a few collected in His name,
The heavenly Father will incline His ear,
Hallowing Himself the service which they frame.
Awake! the majesty of God revere!
Go,—and with foreheads meekly bow'd,
Present your prayer: go,—and rejoice aloud—
The Holy One will hear!
And what 'mid silence deep, with faith sincere,
Ye, in your low and undisturb'd estate,
Shall simply feel, and purely meditate
Of warnings—from the unprecedented might,
Which, in our time, the impious have disclosed;
And of more arduous duties thence imposed
Upon the future advocates of right;
Of mysteries reveal'd,
And judgments unrepeal'd,—
Of earthly revolution,
And final retribution,—
To His omniscience will appear
As offering not unworthy to find place
On this high Day of Thanks, before the throne of grace.

ODE.

COMPOSED IN JANUARY, 1816.

When the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch
Of the tired household of corporeal sense,
And Fancy, in her airy bower, kept watch,
Free to exert some kindly influence;
I saw—but little boots it that my verse
A shadowy visitation should rehearse;
For to our shores such glory hath been brought,
That dreams no brighter are than waking thought—
I saw, in wondrous perspective display'd,
A landscape richer than the happiest skill
Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;—
An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
Tower, town, and city, and suburban grove,
And stately forest where the wild deer rove;
And, in a clouded quarter of the sky,
Through such a portal as with cheerful eye

The traveller greets in time of threaten'd storm,
Issued, to sudden view, a radiant form!
Earthward it glided with a swift descent;
Saint George himself this visitant may be;
And ere a thought could ask in what intent
He sought the regions of humanity,
A thrilling voice was heard, that vivified
My patriotic heart; aloud it cried:
"I, the guardian of this land,
Speak not now of toilsome duty—
Well obey'd was that command—
Days are come of festive beauty;
Haste, virgins, haste!—the flowers which summer gave,
Have perish'd in the field;
But the green thickets plenteously will yield
Fit garlands for the brave,
That will be welcome, if by you entwined.
Haste, virgins, haste! And you, ye matrons grave
Go forth with rival youthfulness of mind,
And gather what ye find
Of hardy laurel, and wild holly boughs,
To deck your stern defenders' modest brows?
Such simple gifts prepare,
Though they have gain'd a worthier meed;
And in due time shall share
Those palms and amaranthine wreaths
Unto their martyr'd countrymen decreed,
In realms where everlasting freshness breathes!"

And lo! with crimson banners proudly streaming,
And upright weapons innocently gleaming,
Along the surface of the spacious plain,
Advance in order the redoubted bands,
And there receive green chaplets from the hands
Of a fair female train,
Maids and matrons, dight
In robes of purest white;
While from the crowd bursts forth a rapturous noise,
By the cloud-capp'd hills retorted,—
And a throng of rosy boys
In loose fashion told their joys,—
And gray-hair'd sires, on staffs supported,
Look'd round, and by their smiling seem'd to say:
"Thus strives a grateful country to display
The mighty debt which nothing can repay."

Anon, I saw, beneath a dome of state,
The feast dealt forth with bounty unconfined,
And while the vaulted roof did emulate
The starry heavens through splendour of the show,

It rang with music, and methought the wind
Scatter'd the tuneful largess far and near,
That they who ask'd not might partake the cheer,
Who listen'd not could hear,
Where'er the wild winds were allow'd to blow,
That work reposing, on the verge
Of busiest exultation hung a dirge,
Breathed from a soft and lonely instrument,
That kindled recollections
Of agonized affections;
And, though some tears the strain attended,
The mournful passion ended
In peace of spirit and sublime content!

But garlands wither,—festal shows depart
Like dreams themselves; and sweetest sounds,
Albeit of effect profound,
It was—and it is gone.
Victorious England! bid the silent art
Reflect, in glowing hues that shall not fade,
Those high achievements,—e'en as she array'd
With second life the deed of Marathon
Upon Athenian walls:
So may she labour for thy civic halls;
And be the guardian spaces
Of consecrated places
Graced with such gifts as sculpture can bestow,
When inspiration guides her pensive toil;
And let imperishable trophies grow
Fix'd in the depths of this courageous soil!
Expressive records of a glorious strife,
And competent to shed a spark divine
Into the torpid heart of daily life;
Trophies on which the morning sun may shine,
As changeful ages flow
With gratulations thoroughly benign!

And ye, Pierian sisters, sprung from Jove,
And sage Mnemosyne,—full long debarr'd
From your first mansions, exiled all too long
From many a consecrated stream and grove,
Dear native regions where ye wont to rove,
Chanting for patriot heroes the reward
Of never-dying song!
Now (for though truth descending from above
The Olympian summit hath destroy'd for aye
Your kindred deities, ye live and move,
And exercise unblamed a generous sway,)
Now, on the margin of some spotless fountain,
Or top serene of unmolested mountain,

Strike audibly the noblest of your lyres,
And for a moment meet my soul's desires!
That I, or some more favour'd bard, may hear
What ye, celestial maids, have often sung
Of Britain's acts,—may catch it with rapt ear,
And give the treasure to our British tongue!
So shall the character of that proud page
Support their mighty theme from age to age;
And, in the desert places of the earth,
When they to future empire have given birth,
So shall the people gather and believe
The bold report, transferr'd to every clime;
And the whole world, not envious but admiring,
And to the last aspiring,
Own that the progeny of that fair isle
Had power as lofty actions to achieve
As were perform'd in man's heroic prime;
Nor wanted, when their fortitude had held
Its even tenor and the foe was quell'd,
A corresponding virtue, to beguile
The hostile purpose of wide-wasting time;
That not in vain they labour to secure
For their great deeds perpetual memory,
And fame, as largely spread as land and sea,
By works of spirit high and passion pure.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

INSCRIPTION FOR A NATIONAL MONUMENT IN COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

INTREPID sons of Albion, not by you
Is life despised! Ah, no!—the spacious earth
Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of birth,
So many objects to which love is due:
Ye slight not life—to God and Nature true;
But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
When duty bids you bleed in open war:
Hence hath your prowess quell'd that impious crew.
Heroes! for instant sacrifice prepared,
Yet fill'd with ardour, and on triumph bent
'Mid direst shocks of mortal accident—
To you who fell, and you whom slaughter spared
To guard the fall'n, and consummate the event—
Your country rears this sacred monument!

OCCASIONED BY THE SAME BATTLE. FEBRUARY, 1816.

THE bard, whose soul is meek as dawning day,
Yet train'd to judgments righteously severe;
Fervent, yet conversant with holy fear,
As recognising one Almighty sway:
He, whose experienced eye can pierce the array
Of past events,—to whom, in vision clear,
The aspiring heads of future things appear,
Like mountain-tops whence mists have roll'd away;
Assoil'd from all incumbrance of our time
He only, if such breathe, in strain's devout
Shall comprehend this victory sublime,
And worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
Which the blest angels, from their peaceful clime,
Beholding, welcomed with a choral shout.

FEBRUARY, 1816.

OH for a kindling touch of that pure flame,
Which taught the offering of song to rise

From thy lone bower beneath the Italian skies,
Great Felicaia! * With celestial aim
It rose—thy saintly rapture to proclaim,
Then, when the imperial city stood released
From bondage threaten'd by the embattled East,
And Christendom respired: from guilt and shame
Redeem'd—from miserable fear set free
By one day's feat—one mighty victory.
Chant the deliverer's praise in every tongue!
The Cross shall spread, the crescent hath wax'd dim!
He conquering—as in earth and heaven was sung—
"He conquering through God, and God by him!"

SEPTEMBER, 1815.

WHILE not a leaf seems faded—while the fields,
With ripening harvests prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask,—this nipping air
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change—and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, "Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields."
For me, who, under kindlier laws, belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry,
Through the green leaves, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song—
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

NOVEMBER 1, 1815.

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon mountain's distant head,
Which, strown with snow as smooth as heaven can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head—
Terrestrial—but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aërial powers
Dissolve that beauty—destined to endure
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes—till genial spring
Have fill'd the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

* See Felicaia's canzone, addressed to John Sobieski, King of Poland, upon his raising the siege of Vienna.

TO B. R. HAYDON, ESQ.

High is our calling, friend! creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashion'd—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert:
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,—
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness:
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

COMPOSED IN RECOLLECTION OF THE EXPEDITION OF THE FRENCH INTO RUSSIA. FEBRUARY, 1816.

Humanity, delighting to behold
A fond reflection of her own decay,
Hath painted Winter like a shrunken, old,
And close-wrapt traveller, through the weary day
Propp'd on a staff, and limping o'er the plain,
As though his weakness were disturb'd by pain;
Or, if a juster fancy should allow
An undisputed symbol of command,
The chosen sceptre in a wither'd bough,
Infirmly grasp'd within a palsied hand.
This emblem suits the helpless and forlorn;
But mighty Winter the device shall scorn;
For he it was,—dread Winter!—who beset,
Flinging round van and rear his ghastly net,
That host,—when from the regions of the Pole
They shrunk, insane ambition's barren goal,
That host,—as huge and strong as e'er defied
Their God, and placed their trust in human pride!
As fathers persecute rebellious sons,
He smote the blossoms of the warlike youth;
He call'd on Frost's inexorable tooth
Life to consume in manhood's firmest hold;
Nor spared the reverend blood that feebly runs;
For why—unless for liberty enroll'd,
And sacred home—ah, why should hoary age be bold?

Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed—
But fleeter far the pinions of the wind,

Which from Siberia's caves the monarch freed,
And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,
And bade the snow their ample backs bestride,
And to the battle ride.
No pitying voice commands a halt,—
No courage can repel the dire assault,—
Distracted, spiritless, benumb'd, and blind,
Whole legions sink,—and, in an instant, find
Burial and death: look for them—and descry,
When morn returns, beneath the clear-blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy!

SONNET ON THE SAME OCCASION. FEBRUARY, 1816

Ye storms, resound the praises of your King!
And ye mild seasons—in a sunny clime,
Midway on some high hill, while Father Time
Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring,
And loud and long of Winter's triumph sing!
Sing ye, with blossoms crown'd, and fruits and flowers,
Of Winter's breath surcharged with sleety showers,
And the dire flapping of his hoary wing!
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass,
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain;
Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the aërial zephyrs as they pass,
That old decrepit Winter—he hath slain
That host which render'd all your beauties vain!

ON THE DISINTERMENT OF THE REMAINS OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN.

Dear relics! from a pit of vilest mould
Uprisen—to lodge among ancestral kings;
And to inflict shame's salutary stings
On the remorseless hearts of men grown old
In a blind worship—men perversely bold
Even to this hour; yet at this hour they quake;
And some their monstrous idol shall forsake.
If to the living truth was ever told
By aught surrender'd from the hollow grave:
O murder'd Prince! meek, loyal, pious, brave!
The power of retribution once was given;
But 'tis a rueful thought that willow bands
So often tie the thunder-wielding hands
Of Justice, sent to earth from higher heaven!

ODE.

Who rises on the banks of Seine,
And binds her temples with the civic wreath?
What joy to read the promise of her mien!
How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings beneath!
But they are ever playing,
And twinkling in the light,
And if a breeze be straying,
That breeze will she invite;
And stands on tiptoe, conscious she is fair,
And calls a look of love into her face—
And spreads her arms—as if the genial air
Alone could satisfy her wide embrace.
Melt, principalities, before her, melt!
Her love ye hail'd—her wrath have felt.
But she through many a change of form hath gone,
And stands amidst ye now, an armèd creature,
Whose panoply is not a thing put on,
But the live scales of a portentous nature,
That, having wrought its way from birth to birth,
Stalks round—abhorr'd by Heaven, a terror to the earth!

I mark'd the breathings of her dragon crest;
My soul in many a midnight vision bow'd
Before the meanings which her spear express'd;
Whether the mighty beam, in scorn upheld,
Threaten'd her foes—or, pompously at rest,
Seem'd to bisect the orbit of her shield,
Like to a long blue bar of solid cloud
At evening stretch'd across the fiery west.

So did she daunt the earth, and God defy!
And wheresoe'er she spread her sovereignty,
Pollution tainted all that was most pure.
Have we not known—and have we not to tell
That Justice seem'd to hear her final knell?
Faith buried deeper in her own deep breast
Her stores—and sigh'd to find them insecure!
And Hope was madden'd by the drops that fell
From shades—her chosen place of short-lived rest,
Which, when they first received her, she had bless'd:
Shame follow'd shame—and woe supplanted woe.
Is this the only change that Time can show?
How long shall vengeance sleep? Ye patient heavens, how long?
Infirm ejaculation from the tongue
Of nations wanting virtue to be strong
Up to the measure of recorded might,—
And daring not to feel the majesty of right!

Weak spirits are there—who would ask,
Upon the pressure of a painful thing,
The lion's sinews or the eagle's wing;
Or let their wishes loose, in forest glade,
Among the lurking powers
Of herbs and lovely flowers,
That man may be accomplish'd for a task
Which his own nature hath enjoin'd—and why?
If when that interference hath relieved him,
He must sink down to languish
In worse than former helplessness,—and lie
Till the caves roar,—and imbecility,
Again engendering anguish,
The same weak wish returns—that had before deceived him.
But Thou, supreme Disposer! might'st not speed
The course of things, and change the creed
Which hath been held aloft before man's sight,
Since the first forming of societies!
Whether, as bards have told in ancient song,
Built up by soft seducing harmonies,—
Or press'd together by the appetite,
And by the power of wrong.

ELEGIAC VERSES.

FEBRUARY, 1816.

"REST, rest, perturbed Earth!
Oh, rest, thou doleful mother of mankind!"
A spirit sang in tones more plaintive than the wind;
"From regions where no evil thing has birth
I come—thy stains to wash away,
Thy cherish'd fetters to unbind,
To open thy sad eyes upon a milder day!
The heavens are throng'd with martyrs that have risen
From out thy noisome prison;
The penal caverns groan
With tens of thousands rent from off the tree
Of hopeful life,—by battle's whirlwind blown
Into the deserts of Eternity.
Unpitied havoc—victims unlamented!
But not on high, where madness is resented,
And murder causes some sad tears to flow,
Though, from the widely-sweeping blow,
The choirs of angels spread triumphantly augmented.

"False parent of mankind!
Obdurate, proud, and blind,

I sprinkle thee with soft celestial dews,
Thy lost maternal heart to reinfuse!
Scattering this far-fetch'd moisture from my wings,
Upon the act a blessing I implore,
Of which the rivers in their secret springs,
The rivers stain'd so oft with human gore,
Are conscious;—may the like return no more!
May Discord—for a seraph's care
Shall be attended with a bolder prayer—
May she, who once disturb'd the seats of bliss,
Those mortal spheres above,
Be chain'd for ever to the black abyss!
And thou, O rescued Earth, by peace and love,
And merciful desires, thy sanctity approve!"

The spirit ended his mysterious rite,
And the pure vision closed in darkness infinite.

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

By persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little incidents will have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such incidents, or renew the gratification of such feelings, names have been given to places by the author and some of his friends, and the following poems written in consequence:—

I.

It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was soften'd down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves appear'd as if in haste
To spur the steps of June; as if their shades
Of *various* green were hindrances that stood
Between them and their object: yet, meanwhile,
There was such deep contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, seem'd as though the countenance
With which it look'd on this delightful day
Were native to the summer. Up the brook
I roam'd in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard, appear'd the voice
Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
The Shepherd's dog, the linnet, and the thrush,
Vied with this waterfall, and made a song
Which, while I listen'd, seem'd like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here;

But 'twas the foliage of the rocks, the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright-green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My Emma, I will dedicate to thee."
Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of "Emma's Dell."

II.

TO JOANNA.

Amid the smoke of cities did you pass
Your time of early youth; and there you learn'd,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living beings by your own fireside
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow towards the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling, retired in our simplicity,
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse,
However trivial, if you thence are taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbour the old steeple tower,
The vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me; and when he had ask'd,
"How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted maid!
And when will she return to us?" he paused;
And, after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,

Reviving obsolete idolatry,
I, like a Runic priest, in characters
Of formidable size, had chisell'd out
Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest side.
Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engender'd betwixt malice and true love,
I was not loath to be so catechised,
And this was my reply :—"As it befell,
One summer morning we had walk'd abroad
At break of day, Joanna and myself.
'Twas that delightful season, when the broom,
Full-flower'd, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
And when we came in front of that tall rock
Which looks towards the east, I there stopp'd short,
And traced the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
When I had gazed, perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laugh'd aloud.
The rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the lady's voice, and laugh'd again:
That ancient woman seated on Helm Crag
Was ready with her cavern: Hammar Scar,
And the tall steep of Silver How, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg, heard,
And Fairfield answer'd with a mountain tone:
Helvellyn far into the clear-blue sky
Carried the lady's voice; old Skiddaw blew
His speaking trumpet; back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone toss'd it from his misty head.
"Now whether," said I to our cordial friend,
Who in the heyday of astonishment
Smiled in my face, "this were in simple truth
A work accomplish'd by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touch'd
With dreams and visionary impulses,
Is not for me to tell; but sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills:
And, while we both were listening, to my side
The fair Joanna drew, as if she wish'd

To shelter from some object of her fear.
And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
In memory of affections old and true,
I chisell'd out in those rude characters
Joanna's name upon the living stone.
And I, and all who dwell by my fire-side,
Have call'd the lovely rock, 'Joanna's Rock.'" *

III.

THERE is an eminence,—of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun.
We can behold it from our orchard-seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this cliff, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favourite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And she who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely summit given my name. †

IV.

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy.
And there, myself and two beloved friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Saunter'd on this retired and difficult way.

Ill suits the road with one in haste, but we
Play'd with our time; and, as we stroll'd along,

* In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several inscriptions upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic; they are, without doubt, Roman.

† As this was published in 1800, two years before he was married, the person alluded to must be his sister.

It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had toss'd ashore,
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or wither'd bough,
Each on the other heap'd, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimm'd the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as sudden;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its very playmate, and its moving soul.

And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern
So stately, of the Queen Osmunda named,
Plant lovelier in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or lady of the mere,
Sole sitting by the shores of old romance.
So fared we that sweet morning: from the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And, in the fashion which I have described,
Feeding unthinking fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze, we saw
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a man,
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
That way we turn'd our steps, nor was it long
Ere, making ready comments on the sight
Which then we saw, with one and the same voice,
Did all cry out that he must be indeed
An idler, he who thus could lose a day
Of the mid-harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter-time.
Thus talking of that peasant, we approach'd

Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turn'd his head
To greet us—and we saw a man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I look'd at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustain'd.
Too weak to labour in the harvest-field,
The man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My friend, myself, and she who then received
The same admonishment, have call'd the place
By a memorial name, uncouth, indeed,
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discover'd coast;
And "Point Rash Judgment" is the name it bears.

V.

TO M. H.

Our walk was far among the ancient trees;
There was no road, nor any woodman's path;
But the thick umbrage, checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, on the soft green turf
Beneath the branches, of itself had made
A track, which brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone basin which the herdsman's hand
Had shaped for their refreshment; nor did sun
Or wind from any quarter ever come,
But as a blessing, to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself.
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them; but it is beautiful;
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,

And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it, that in his death hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts:
And therefore, my sweet Mary, this still nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from you.

VI.

When, to the attractions of the busy world,
Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful vale,
Sharp season follow'd of continual storm
In deepest winter; and, from week to week,
Pathway, and lane, and public road were clogg'd
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill
At a short distance from my cottage, stands
A stately fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof
Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unencumber'd floor.
Here, in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And sometimes on a speck of visible earth,
The redbreast near me hopp'd; nor was I loath
To sympathise with vulgar coppice birds
That, for protection from the nipping blast,
Hither repair'd. A single beech-tree grew
Within this grove of firs; and, on the fork
Of that one beech, appear'd a thrush's nest;
A last year's nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
As gave sure sign that they who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Amid the fir-trees all the summer long
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes,
A few sheep, stragglers from some mountain flock,
Would watch my motions with suspicious stare,
From the remotest outskirts of the grove,—
Some nook where they had made their final stand,
Huddling together from two fears—the fear
Of me, and of the storm. Full many an hour
Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted, and had thriven
In such perplex'd and intricate array,
That vainly did I seek, between their stems,
A length of open space,—where to and fro
My feet might move without concern or care:
And, baffled thus, before the storm relax'd,
I ceased that shelter to frequent,—and prized
Less than I wish'd to prize, that calm recess.

The snows dissolved, and genial spring return'd
To clothe the fields with verdure. Other haunts
Meanwhile were mine; till, one bright April day,
By chance retiring from the glare of noon
To this forsaken covert, there I found
A hoary pathway traced between the trees,
And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood
Much wondering at my own simplicity
How I could e'er have made a fruitless search
For what was now so obvious. At the sight,
Conviction also flash'd upon my mind
That this same path (within the shady grove
Begun and ended) by my brother's steps
Had been impress'd. To sojourn a short while
Beneath my roof, he from the barren seas
Had newly come—a cherish'd visitant!
And much did it delight me to perceive
That to this opportune recess allured,
He had survey'd it with a finer eye,
A heart more wakeful; that, more loath to part
From place so lovely, he had worn the track
By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
In that habitual restlessness of foot
With which the sailor measures o'er and o'er
His short domain upon the vessel's deck,
While she is travelling through the dreary sea.

When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's pleasant shore,
And taken thy first leave of those green hills
And rocks that were the playground of thy youth,
Year follow'd year, my brother! and we two,
Conversing not, knew little in what mould
Each other's minds were fashion'd; and at length,
When once again we met in Grasmere Vale,
Between us there was little other bond
Than common feelings of fraternal love.
But thou, a schoolboy, to the sea hadst carried
Undying recollections. Nature there
Was with thee; she who loved us both, she still
Was with thee; and even so didst thou become
A *silent* poet; from the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.
Back to the joylèss ocean thou art gone;
And now I call the pathway by thy name,
And love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
Thither do I withdraw when cloudless suns

Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome and strong:
And there I sit at evening, when the steep
Of Silver How, and Grasmere's placid lake,
And one green island, gleam between the stems
Of the dark firs, a visionary scene;
And, while I gaze upon the spectacle
Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
My brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while thou,
Muttering the verses which I mutter'd first
Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
Art pacing to and fro the vessel's deck
In some far region, here, while o'er my head,
At every impulse of the moving breeze,
The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
Alone I tread this path—for aught I know,
Timing my steps to thine; and, with a store
Of undistinguishable sympathies,
Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
When we, and others whom we love, shall meet
A second time in Grasmere's happy vale.*

* This wish was not granted; the lamented person, not long after, perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his duty, as commander of the Hon. East-India Company's vessel, the *Earl of Abergavenny*.

INSCRIPTIONS.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE-PENCIL UPON A STONE, THE LARGEST OF A HEAP LYING NEAR A DESERTED QUARRY, UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS AT RYDALE.

STRANGER! this hillock of misshapen stones
Is not a ruin of the ancient time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the cairn
Of some old British chief: 'tis nothing more
Than the rude embryo of a little dome
Or pleasure-house, once destined to be built
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanced, Sir William having learn'd
That from the shore a full-grown man might wade,
And make himself a freeman of this spot
At any hour he chose, the knight forthwith
Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinish'd task.
The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps,
Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of the intended pile, which would have been
Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
So that, I guess, the linnet and the thrush,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wonder'd at the work. But blame him not,
For old Sir William was a gentle knight
Bred in this vale, to which he appertain'd
With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
And for the outrage which he had devised
Entire forgiveness! But if thou art one
On fire with thy impatience to become
An inmate of these mountains,—if, disturb'd
By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
Out of the quiet rock the elements
Of thy trim mansion destined soon to blaze
In snow-white splendour,—think again, and, taught
By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;
There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,
And let the redbreast hop from stone to stone.

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE-PENCIL ON A STONE ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN OF BLACK COMB, CUMBERLAND.

Stay, bold adventurer; rest a while thy limbs
On this commodious seat! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge eminence—from blackness named,
And, to far-travell'd storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boist'rous visitants
Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow:
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveil'd!
Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That, on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic labourer pitch'd his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,
To measure height and distance; lonely task,
Week after week pursued! To him was given
Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestow'd
On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvas dwelling, suddenly
The many-colour'd map before his eyes
Became invisible; for all around
Had darkness fallen—unthreaten'd, unproclaim'd—
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguish'd in a moment; total gloom,
In which he sate alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain's silent top!

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., LEICESTERSHIRE.

Th' embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign;
If but the cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.
One woo'd the silent Art with studious pains,—
These groves have heard the other's pensive strains;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindliest powers sustain the tree,
And love protect it from all injury!
And when its potent branches, wide out-thrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial stone,

And to a favourite resting-place invite,
For coolness grateful and a sober light;
Here may some painter sit in future days,
Some future poet meditate his lays;
Not mindless of that distant age renown'd,
When inspiration hover'd o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth field;
And of that famous youth,* full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakspeare's self approved,
Fletcher's associate, Jonson's friend beloved.

IN A GARDEN OF THE SAME.

Oft is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers are laid in dust;
And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great:
Hence, when yon mansion and the flowery trim
Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim,
And all its stately trees, are pass'd away,
This little niche, unconscious of decay,
Perchance may still survive. And be it known
That it was scoop'd within the living stone,—
Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
Of labourer plodding for his daily gains;
But by an industry that wrought in love,
With help from female hands, that proudly strove
To shape the work, what time these walks and bowers
Were framed, to cheer dark winter's lonely hours.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., AND IN HIS NAME, FOR AN URN, PLACED BY HIM AT THE TERMINATION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED AVENUE IN THE SAME GROUNDS.

Ye lime-trees, ranged before this hallow'd urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at spring's return;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they at length have framed a darksome aisle;
Like a recess within that awful pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
There, though by right the excelling painter sleep
Where death and glory a joint Sabbath keep,
Yet not the less his spirit would hold dear

* Beaumont, the dramatic poet.

Self-hidden praise, and friendship's private tear:
Hence, on my patrimonial grounds have I
Raised this frail tribute to his memory,
From youth a zealous follower of the art
That he profess'd, attach'd to him in heart;
Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died.

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON.

Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground,
Stand yet, but, stranger, hidden from thy view,
The ivied ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu;
Erst a religious house, that day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
And when those rites had ceased, the spot gave birth
To honourable men of various worth:
There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child;
There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams
Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the buskin'd stage.
Communities are lost, and empires die,—
And things of holy use unhallow'd lie;
They perish; but the intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a pile that ne'er decays.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL UPON A STONE IN THE WALL OF THE HOUSE (AN OUT-HOUSE) ON THE ISLAND AT GRASMERE.

Rude is this edifice, and thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintain'd
Proportions more harmonious, and approach'd
To somewhat of a closer fellowship
With the ideal grace. Yet as it is,
Do take it in good part: alas the poor
Vitruvius of our village had no help
From the great city; never, on the leaves
Of red morocco folio, saw display'd
The skeletons and pre-existing ghosts
Of beauties yet unborn—the rustic box,
Snug cot, with coach-house, shed, and hermitage.
Thou seest a homely pile—yet to these walls

The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
The new-dropp'd lamb finds shelter from the wind.
And hither does one poet sometimes row
His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
With plenteous store of heath and wither'd fern,
(A lading which he with his sickle cuts
Among the mountains,) and beneath this roof
He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the sheep,
Panting beneath the burthen of their wool,
Lie round him, even as if they were a part
Of his own household: nor, while from his bed
He through that door-place looks towards the lake
And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep—
Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy!

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE.

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR.

A DESCRIPTION.

The class of beggars to which the old man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I SAW an aged beggar in my walk;
And he was seated by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
That overlays the pile; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one;
And scann'd them with a fix'd and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild, unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate his food in solitude:
And ever, scatter'd from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approach'd within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known; and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering horseman traveller does not throw
With careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops, that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old man's hat; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Towards the aged beggar turns a look

Side-long, and half reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind; and, if perchance
The old man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-side,
And passes gently by,—without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.
He travels on, a solitary man,—
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turn'd, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky—one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bowbent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey; seeing still,
And never knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scatter'd leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impress'd on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor traveller!
His staff trails with him; scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust; he is so still
In look and motion that the cottage curs,
Ere he have pass'd the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breech'd—all pass him by:
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this man useless. Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom,—ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, and wisdom, deem him not
A burden of the earth. 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably link'd. While thus he creeps

From door to door, the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremember'd, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half wisdom half experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets, and thinly-scatter'd villages,
Where'er the aged beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find itself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness. Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle; minds like these,
In childhood, from this solitary being,
This helpless wanderer, have perchance received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
Which overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Shelter'd, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred; all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least—
And 'tis no vulgar service—makes them felt.

Yet further. Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel

No self-reproach: who of the moral law
Establish'd in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent,
Meanwhile, in any tenderness of heart
Or act of love to those with whom we dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
But of the poor man ask, the abject poor,
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?
No! man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been
Themselves the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings—have been kind to such
As needed kindness—for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
Such pleasure is to one kind being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
Duly as Friday comes, though press'd herself
By her own wants, she from her chest of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has led him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone—
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unletter'd villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys: let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows:
And let the charter'd wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his gray locks against his wither'd face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never House, misnamed "of Industry,"
Make him a captive! for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age!

Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures: if his eyes have now
Been doom'd so long to settle on the earth,
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting—let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gather'd meal; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die!

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE.

'Tis not for th' unfeeling, the falsely refined,
The squeamish in taste, and the narrow of mind,
And the small critic wielding his delicate pen,
That I sing of old Adam, the pride of old men.

He dwells in the centre of London's wide town;
His staff is a sceptre—his gray hairs a crown;
Erect as a sunflower he stands, and the streak
Of the unfaded rose is express'd on his cheek.

'Mid the dews, in the sunshine of morn,—'mid the joy
Of the fields, he collected that bloom, when a boy;
There fashion'd that countenance, which, in spite of a stain
That his life hath received, to the last will remain.

A farmer he was; and his house far and near
Was the boast of the country for excellent cheer:
How oft have I heard, in sweet Tilsbury Vale,
Of the silver-rimm'd horn whence he dealt his good ale.

Yet Adam was far as the farthest from ruin,
His fields seem'd to know what their master was doing;
And turnips, and corn-land, and meadow, and lea,
All caught the infection—as generous as he.

Yet Adam prized little the feast and the bowl,—
The fields better suited the ease of his soul:
He stray'd through the fields like an indolent wight,
The quiet of Nature was Adam's delight.

For Adam was simple in thought, and the poor,
Familiar with him, made an inn of his door:
He gave them the best that he had; or, to say
What less may mislead you—they took it away.

Thus thirty smooth years did he thrive on his farm;
The genius of plenty preserved him from harm:
At length, what to most is a season of sorrow,
His means are run out,—he must beg, or must borrow.

To the neighbours he went,—all were free with their money;
For his hive had so long been replenish'd with honey
That they dreamt not of dearth. He continued his rounds,
Knock'd here, and knock'd there,—pounds still adding to pounds.

He paid what he could with this ill-gotten pelf,
And something, it might be, reserved for himself:
Then (what is too true) without hinting a word,
Turn'd his back on the country—and off like a bird.

You lift up your eyes! and I guess that you frame
A judgment too harsh of the sin and the shame;
In him it was scarcely a business of art,
For this he did all in the *ease* of his heart.

To London—a sad emigration I ween—
With his gray hairs he went from the brook and the green;
And there, with small wealth but his legs and his hands,
As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

All trades, as needs was, did old Adam assume,—
Served as stable-boy, errand-boy, porter, and groom;
But nature is gracious, necessity kind,
And, in spite of the shame that may lurk in his mind,

He seems ten birthdays younger, is green and is stout;
Twice as fast as before does his blood run about;
You would say that each hair of his beard was alive,
And his fingers are busy as bees in a hive.

For he's not like an old man that leisurely goes
About work that he knows, in a track that he knows;
But often his mind is compell'd to demur,
And you guess that the more then his body must stir.

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
Like one whose own country's far over the sea;
And Nature, while through the great city he hies,
Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

This gives him the fancy of one that is young,
More of soul on his face than of words on his tongue;
Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
And tears of fifteen have come into his eyes.

What's a tempest to him, or the dry parching heats?
Yet he watches the clouds that pass over the streets;
With a look of such earnestness often will stand,
You might think he'd twelve reapers at work in the Strand.

Where proud Covent Garden, in desolate hours
Of snow and hoar-frost, spreads her fruit and her flowers,
Old Adam will smile at the pains that have made
Poor Winter look fine in such strange masquerade.

Mid coaches and chariots, a waggon of straw,
Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam can draw;
With a thousand soft pictures his memory will teem,
And his hearing is touch'd with the sounds of a dream.

Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his way,
Thrusts his hands in the waggon, and smells at the hay;
He thinks of the fields he so often hath mown,
And is happy as if the rich freight were his own.

But chiefly to Smithfield he loves to repair,—
If you pass by at morning you'll meet with him there:
The breath of the cows you may see him inhale,
And his heart all the while is in Tilsbury Vale.

Now farewell, old Adam! when low thou art laid,
May one blade of grass spring up over thy head;
And I hope that thy grave, wheresoever it be,
Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.

THE SMALL CELANDINE.

THERE is a flower, the lesser celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun itself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm and swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distress'd,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this flower I pass'd,
And recognised it, though an alter'd form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopp'd, and said, with inly-mutter'd voice,
"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

"The sunshine may not bless it, nor the dew:
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, wither'd, changed of hue."
And in my spleen, I smiled that it was gray.

To be a prodigal's favourite—then, worse truth,
A miser's pensioner—behold our lot!
O man! that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things youth needed not!

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY.

A SKETCH.

The little hedge-row birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression; every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought. He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
Long patience hath such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by Nature led
To peace so perfect, that the young behold
With envy what the old man hardly feels.

THE TWO THIEVES; OR, THE LAST STAGE OF AVARICE.

Oh, now that the genius of Bewick were mine,
And the skill which he learn'd on the banks of the Tyne:
Then the muses might deal with me just as they chose,
For I 'd take my last leave both of verse and of prose.

What feats would I work with my magical hand!
Book-learning and books should be banish'd the land:
And for hunger and thirst, and such troublesome calls,
Every ale-house should then have a feast on its walls.

The traveller would hang his wet clothes on a chair;
Let them smoke, let them burn, not a straw would he care:
For the Prodigal Son, Joseph's Dream and his Sheaves,
Oh, what would they be to my tale of Two Thieves?

Little Dan is unbreech'd, he is three birthdays old,
His grandsire that age more than thirty times told;
There are ninety good seasons of fair and foul weather
Between them—and both go a-stealing together.

With chips is the carpenter strewing his floor—
Is a cart-load of peats at an old woman's door—
Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will slide,
And his grandson 's as busy at work by his side!

Old Daniel begins, he stops short—and his eye,
Through the lost look of dotage, is cunning and sly,
'Tis a look which at this time is hardly his own,
But tells a plain tale of the days that are flown.

Dan once had a heart which was moved by the wires
Of manifold pleasures and many desires:
And what if he cherish'd his purse? 'Twas no more
Than treading a path trod by thousands before.

'Twas a path trod by thousands; but Daniel is one
Who went something further than others have gone:
And now with old Daniel you see how it fares;
You see to what end he has brought his gray hairs.

The pair sally forth hand in hand: ere the sun
Has peer'd o'er the beeches their work is begun;
And yet, into whatever sin they may fall,
This child but half knows it, and that not at all.

They hunt through the streets with deliberate tread,
And each, in his turn, is both leader and led;
And wherever they carry their plots and their wiles,
Every face in the village is dimpled with smiles.

Neither check'd by the rich nor the needy they roam;
For gray-headed Dan has a daughter at home,
Who will gladly repair all the damage that 's done:
And three, were it ask'd, would be render'd for one.

Old man! whom so oft I with pity have eyed,
I love thee, and love the sweet boy at thy side:
Long yet may'st thou live! for a teacher we see
That lifts up the veil of our nature, in thee.

THE MATRON OF JEDBURGH AND HER HUSBAND.

At Jedburgh, in the course of a tour in Scotland, my companion and I went into private lodgings for a few days; and the following verses were called forth by the character and domestic situation of our hostess.

AGE! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers!
And call a train of laughing hours!
And bid them dance, and bid them sing;
And thou, too, mingle in the ring!
Take to thy heart a new delight;
If not, make merry in despite!
For there is one who scorns thy power;
But dance! for, under Jedburgh Tower,
There liveth, in the prime of glee,
A woman, whose years are seventy-three,
And she will dance and sing with thee.

Nay, start not at that figure there!
Him who is rooted to his chair—
Look at him—look again! for he
Hath long been of thy family.
With legs that move not, if they can,
And useless arms, a trunk of man
He sits; and with a vacant eye;
A sight to make a stranger sigh!
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom:
His world is in this single room.
Is this a place for mirth and cheer—
Can merrymaking enter here?

The joyous woman is the mate
Of him in that forlorn estate!
He breathes a subterraneous damp;
But bright as vesper shines her lamp:
He is as mute as Jedburgh Tower;
She jocund as it was of yore,
With all its bravery on; in times,
When, all alive with merry chimes,
Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
It roused the vale to holiday.

I praise thee, Matron! and thy due
Is praise—heroic praise, and true!
With admiration I behold
Thy gladness, unsubdued and bold:
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent:
This do I see, and something more;
A strength unthought of heretofore!
Delighted am I for thy sake,
And yet a higher joy partake.
Our human nature throws away
Its second twilight, and looks gay:
A land of promise and of pride
Unfolding wide as life is wide.

Ah! see her helpless charge! enclosed
Within himself, as seems—composed;
To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
The strife of happiness and pain,
Utterly dead! yet, in the guise
Of little infants, when their eyes
Begin to follow to and fro
The persons that before them go,
He tracks her motions, quick or slow.
Her buoyant spirit can prevail
Where common cheerfulness would fail.

She strikes upon him with the heat
Of July suns; he feels it sweet:
An animal delight, though dim—
'Tis all that now remains for him!

I look'd, I scann'd her o'er and o'er:
The more I look'd, I wonder'd more;
When suddenly I seem'd t' espy
A trouble in her strong black eye;
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over bright!
And soon she made this matter plain,
And told me, in a thoughtful strain,
That she had borne a heavy yoke,
Been stricken by a twofold stroke:
Ill-health of body, and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.
So be it!—but let praise ascend
To Him who is our Lord and Friend!
Who from disease and suffering
Hath call'd for thee a second spring;
Repaid thee for that sore distress
By no untimely joyousness,
Which makes of thine a blissful state,
And cheers thy melancholy mate!

"Gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

THOUGH narrow be that old man's cares, and near,
The poor old man is greater than he seems;
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams;
An ample sov'reignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds, and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen that never part,—
Seen the "Seven Whistlers" in their nightly rounds,
And counted them; and oftentimes will start—
For overhead are sweeping "Gabriel's Hounds,"
Doom'd, with their impious lord, the flying hart
To chase for ever on aërial ground.

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON ST HERBERT'S ISLAND, DERWENTWATER.

THIS island, guarded from profane approach
By mountains high and waters widely spread,

Is that recess to which St Herbert came
In life's decline: a self-secluded man,
After long exercise in social cares
And offices humane, intent t' adore
The Deity with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things.
Stranger! this shapeless heap of stones and earth
(Long be its mossy covering undisturb'd!)
Is reverenced as a vestige of the abode
In which, through many seasons, from the world
Removed, and the affections of the world,
He dwelt in solitude. But he had left
A fellow-labourer, whom the good man loved
As his own soul; and when within his cave
Alone he knelt before the crucifix,
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
Peal'd to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle, and thought
Of his companion, he would pray that both
(Now that their earthly duties were fulfill'd)
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So pray'd he: as our chronicles report,
Though here the hermit number'd his last day,
Far from St Cuthbert, his beloved friend,
Those holy men both died in the same hour.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC POEMS.

EPITAPHS

TRANSLATED FROM CHIABRERA.

I.

PERHAPS some needful service of the state
Drew Titus from the depth of studious bowers,
And doom'd him to contend in faithless courts,
Where gold determines between right and wrong.
Yet did at length his loyalty of heart,
And his pure native genius, lead him back
To wait upon the bright and gracious Muse,
Whom he had early loved. And not in vain
Such course he held! Bologna's learned schools
Where gladden'd by the sage's voice, and hung
With fondness on these sweet Nestorian strains.
There pleasure crown'd his days, and all his thoughts
A roseate fragrance breathed. O human life,
That never art secure from dolorous change!
Behold a high injunction suddenly
To Arno's side conducts him, and he charm'd
A Tuscan audience, but full soon was call'd
To the perpetual silence of the grave.
Mourn, Italy, the loss of him who stood
A champion, steadfast and invincible,
To quell the rage of literary war!

II.

O THOU who movest onward with a mind
Intent upon thy way, pause, though in haste!
'Twill be no fruitless moment. I was born
Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicate
To sacred studies; and the Roman shepherd
Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous flock.
Much did I watch, much labour'd; nor had power
To escape from many strange indignities;
Was smitten by the great ones of the world,

But did not fall; for virtue braves all shocks,
Upon herself resting immovably.
Me did a kindlier fortune then invite
To serve the glorious Henry, king of France,
And in his hands I saw a high reward
Stretch'd out for my acceptance; but death came.
Now, reader, learn from this my fate, how false,
How treacherous to her promise is the world,
And trust in God, to whose eternal doom
Must bend the sceptred potentates of earth.

III.

THERE never breathed a man who when his life
Was closing, might not of that life relate
Toils long and hard. The warrior will report
Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
And blast of trumpets. He, who hath been doom'd
To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
Envy, and heart-inquietude, derived
From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
Could represent the countenance horrible
Of the vex'd waters, and the indignant rage
Of Auster and Boötes. Forty years
Over the well-steer'd galleys did I rule.
From huge Pelorus to th' Atlantic pillars,
Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown;
And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and oft:
Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
I knew the force; and hence the rough sea's pride
Avail'd not to my vessel's overthrow.
What noble pomp and frequent have not I
On regal decks beheld! yet in the end
I learn that one poor moment can suffice
To equalise the lofty and the low.
We sail the sea of life—a *calm* one finds,
And one a *tempest*—and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.
If more of my condition ye would know,
Savona was my birthplace, and I sprang
Of noble parents: sixty years and three
Lived I—then yielded to a slow disease.

IV.

DESTINED to war from very infancy
Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took

In Malta the white symbol of the cross;
Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
Hazard or toil: among the sands was seen
Of Libya; and not seldom, on the banks
Of wide Hungarian Danube, 'twas my lot
To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
So lived I, and repined not at such fate:
This only grieves me, for it seems a wrong,
That stripp'd of arms I to my end am brought
On the soft down of my paternal home.
Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause
To blush for me. Thou, loiter not nor halt
In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
How fleeting and how frail is human life.

V.

Not without heavy grief of heart did he
On whom the duty fell (for at that time
The father sojourn'd in a distant land)
Deposit in the hollow of this tomb
A brother's child, most tenderly beloved!
Francesco was the name the youth had borne,
Pozzobonnelli his illustrious house;
And, when beneath this stone the corse was laid,
The eyes of all Savona stream'd with tears.
Alas! the twentieth April of his life
Had scarcely flower'd; and at this early time,
By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
That greatly cheer'd his country: to his kin
He promised comfort; and the flattering thoughts
His friends had in their fondness entertain'd,*
He suffer'd not to languish or decay.
Now is there not good reason to break forth
Into a passionate lament?—O soul!
Short while a pilgrim in our nether world,
Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air!
And round this earthly tomb let roses rise,
An everlasting spring! in memory
Of that delightful fragrance which was once,
From thy mild manners, quietly exhaled.

VI.

Pause, courteous spirit!—Balbi supplicates
That thou, with no reluctant voice, for him

* In justice to the author, I subjoin the original:—
"E degli amici
Non lasciava languire i bei pensieri."

Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst prefer
A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
This to the dead by sacred right belongs;
All else is nothing. Did occasion suit
To tell his worth, the marble of this tomb
Would ill suffice: for Plato's lore sublime,
And all the wisdom of the Stagirite,
Enrich'd and beautified his studious mind:
With Archimedes also he conversed
As with a chosen friend, nor did he leave
Those laureate wreaths ungather'd which the nymphs
Twine on the top of Pindus. Finally,
Himself above each lower thought uplifting,
His ears he closed to listen to the song
Which Sion's kings did consecrate of old;
And fix'd his Pindus upon Lebanon.
A blessèd man! who of protracted days
Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep;
But truly did *he* live his life.—Urbino,
Take pride in him. O passenger, farewell!

LINES,

COMPOSED AT GRASMERE, DURING A WALK, ONE EVENING, AFTER A STORMY DAY, THE AUTHOR HAVING JUST READ IN A NEWSPAPER THAT THE DISSOLUTION OF MR FOX WAS HOURLY EXPECTED.

Loud is the Vale!—the voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams!
Of all her voices, one!

Loud is the Vale!—this inland depth
In peace is roaring like the sea:
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain depress'd,
Importunate and heavy load!
The comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss;

And when the mighty pass away,
What is it more than this—

That man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be;
Then wherefore should we mourn?

LINES,

WRITTEN NOVEMBER 13, 1814, ON A BLANK LEAF, IN A COPY OF THE AUTHOR'S POEM "THE EXCURSION," UPON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF THE LATE VICAR OF KENDAL.

To public notice, with reluctance strong,
Did I deliver this unfinish'd song;
Yet for one happy issue; and I look
With self-congratulation on the book
Which pious, learned Murfitt saw and read.
Upon my thoughts his saintly spirit fed;
He conn'd the new-born lay with grateful heart;
Foreboding not how soon he must depart,
Unwitting that to him the joy was given
Which good men take with them from earth to heaven.

ELEGIAC STANZAS,

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE IN A STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day
Whene'er I look'd, thy image still was there;
It trembled, but it never pass'd away.

How perfect was the calm! It seem'd no sleep,
No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.

Ah! *then*, if mine had been the painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary pile!
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss:

Thou shouldst have seem'd a treasure-house, a mine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine,
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such picture would I at that time have made;
And seen the soul of truth in every part;
A faith, a trust, that could not be betray'd.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanized my soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, friend! who would have been the friend
If he had lived, of him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend,
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh, 'tis a passionate work!—yet wise and well;
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in th' unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

TO THE DAISY.

SWEET flower! belike, one day, to have
A place upon thy poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more:
But he, who was on land, at sea,
My brother, too, in loving thee,
Although he loved more silently,
Sleeps by his native shore.

Ah! hopeful, hopeful was the day
When to that ship he bent his way,
To govern and to guide:
His wish was gain'd: a little time
Would bring him back in manhood's prime,
And free for life, these hills to climb,
With all his wants supplied.

And full of hope day follow'd day,
While that stout ship at anchor lay
Beside the shores of Wight;
The May had then made all things green,
And, floating there in pomp serene,
That ship was goodly to be seen,
His pride and his delight!

Yet then, when call'd ashore, he sought,
The tender peace of rural thought;
In more than happy mood,
To your abodes, bright daisy flowers;
He then would steal at leisure hours,
And loved you glittering in your bowers,
A starry multitude.

But hark the word!—the ship is gone;
From her long course returns—anon
Sets sail: in season due,
Once more on English earth they stand:
But when a third time from the land
They parted, sorrow was at hand
For him and for his crew.

Ill-fated vessel! ghastly shock!
At length deliver'd from the rock,
The deep she hath regain'd;
And through the stormy night they steer,
Labouring for life, in hope and fear,
Towards a safer shore—how near,
Yet not to be attain'd!

"Silence!" the brave commander cried!
To that calm word a shriek replied,
It was the last death-shriek.
A few appear by morning light,
Preserved upon the tall mast's height:
Oft in my soul I see that sight;
But one dear remnant of the night—
For him in vain I seek.

Six weeks, beneath the moving sea,
He lay in slumber quietly:
Unforced, by wind or wave,
To quit the ship for which he died,
(All claims of duty satisfied;)
And there they found him at her side,
And bore him to the grave.

Vain service! yet not vainly done,
For this, if other end were none,
That he, who had been cast
Upon a way of life unmeet
For such a gentle soul and sweet,
Should find an undisturb'd retreat
Near what he loved, at last;

That neigbourhood of grove and field
To him a resting-place should yield.
A meek man and a brave!
The birds shall sing, and ocean make
A mournful murmur, for *his* sake;
And thou, sweet flower, shalt sleep and wake
Upon his senseless grave!

ODE.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

"The child is father of the man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

See p. 1.

I.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more!

II.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.

III.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief;
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong:
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;

Land and sea
Give themselves up to jolity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday!
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
shepherd boy!

IV.

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh, evil day! if I were sullen
While the earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May morning;
And the children are pulling,
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
But there's a tree, of many one,
A single field which I have look'd upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,—
He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,

And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII.

Behold the child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the persons, down to palsied age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage; thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,

Which we are toiling all our lives to find;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom, on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring th' inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife.
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy, that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benedictions: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blessed—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Black misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised!
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us—cherish—and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea

Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither,—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We, in thought, will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy
Which having been, must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering!
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI.

And O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Think not of any severing of our lives!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquish'd one delight,
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks, which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they:
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality!
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live;
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears;
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

THE EXCURSION.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G., &c &c

OFT, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!
In youth I roam'd, on youthful pleasures bent;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
Now by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reach'd its close; but life is insecure,
And hope fall oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favour; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND.
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE.

THE reader must be apprised that this poem belongs to the second part of a long and laborious work, ("The Recluse,") which is to consist of three parts. The author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued friends, presents the following pages to the public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which "The Excursion" is a part, derives its title of "The Recluse." Several years ago, when the author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far nature and education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That work, addressed to a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the author's intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled "The Recluse," as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement. The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connexion with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The author would not have deemed himself justified in saying upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please, and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen. Nothing further need be added than that the first and third parts of "The Recluse" will consist chiefly of meditations in the author's own person; and that in the intermediate part ("The Excursion") the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more

animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the meantime the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of "The Recluse," may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole poem:—

"On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mix'd;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the soul—an impulse to herself;
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of th' Individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all;
I sing:—'fit audience' let me find, 'though few!'

"So pray'd, more gaining than he ask'd, the Bard,
Holiest of men. Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form;
Jehovah, with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones,
I pass them, unalarm'd. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy—scoop'd out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our minds—into the mind of man—
My haunt, and the main region of my song—
Beauty—a living presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal forms
Which craft of delicate spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic main, why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.

"I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation;—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external world
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too
(Theme this but little heard of among men)
The external world is fitted to the mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be call'd) which they with blended might
Accomplish:—this is our high argument.

"Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities; may these sounds
Have their authentic comment—that, even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!

"Come thou, prophetic Spirit, that inspirest
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty poets: upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine;
Shedding benignant influence,—and secure,
Itself, from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere! And if with this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the mind and man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was,
The transitory being that beheld
This vision; when and where, and how he lived;
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then, dread Power,
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination, may my life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners; nurse
My heart in genuine freedom: all pure thoughts
Be with me; so shall Thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!"

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK I.

THE WANDERER.

A summer forenoon—The Author reaches a ruined cottage upon a common, and there meets with a reverend friend, the Wanderer, of whom he gives an account—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the trees that surround the cottage, relates the history of its last inhabitant.

'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high:
Southward, the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam; but all the northern downs,
In clearest air ascending, shew'd far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows, flung
From many a brooding cloud; far as the sight
Could reach, those many shadows lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed;
Pleasant to him who on the soft cool moss
Extends his careless limbs along the front
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
Where the wren warbles; while the dreaming man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With sidelong eye looks out upon the scene,
By that impending covert made more soft,
More low and distant! Other lot was mine;
Yet with good hope that soon I should obtain
As grateful resting-place, and livelier joy.
Across a bare wide common I was toiling
With languid feet, which by the slippery ground
Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along.

Upon that open level stood a grove,
The wish'd-for port to which my steps were bound.
Thither I came, and there—amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms—

Appear'd a roofless hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other! I look'd round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
Him whom I sought; a man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpair'd.
There was he seen upon the cottage bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep:
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I mark'd the day before—alone
And in the middle of the public way
Station'd, as if to rest himself, with face
Turn'd towards the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded to his figure, as he stood,
Detain'd for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support; the countenance of the man
Was hidden from my view, and he himself
Unrecognized; but, stricken by the sight,
With slacken'd footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting. For the night
We parted, nothing willingly; and now
He by appointment waited for me here,
Beneath the shelter of these clustering elms.

We were tried friends: I from my childhood up
Had known him. In a little town obscure,
A market-village, seated in a tract
Of mountains, where my school-day time was pass'd,
One room he own'd, the fifth part of a house,
A place to which he drew, from time to time
And found a kind of home or harbour there.

He loved me; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks—too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
On holidays, we wander'd through the woods,
A pair of random travellers we sate—
We walk'd; he pleased me with his sweet discourse
Of things which he had seen; and often touch'd
Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
Turn'd inward; or at my request he sang
Old songs—the product of his native hills;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care
Of the industrious husbandman diffused
Through a parch'd meadow-ground in time of drought.

Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse:
How precious when in riper days I learn'd
To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
In the plain presence of his dignity!

O many are the poets that are sown
By Nature! men endow'd with highest gifts—
The vision, and the faculty divine—
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,
(Which in the docile season of their youth
It was denied them to acquire, through lack
Of culture and the inspiring aid of books;
Or haply by a temper too severe;
Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame;)
Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
By circumstance to take unto the height
The measure of themselves, these favour'd beings,
All but a scatter'd few, live out their time,
Husbanding that which they possess within,
And go to the grave unthought of. Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least; else surely this man had not left
His graces unreveal'd and unproclaim'd.
But, as the mind was fill'd with inward light,
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honour'd—far as he was known.
And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
The doings, observations, which his mind
Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;
Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
Or rise, as venerable Nature leads,
The high and tender Muses shall accept
With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born:
There, on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His father dwelt; and died in poverty;
While he, whose lowly fortune I retrace,
The youngest of three sons, was yet a babe,
A little one, unconscious of their loss.
But ere he had outgrown his infant days,
His widow'd mother, for a second mate,
Espoused the teacher of the village school;
Who on her offspring zealously bestow'd
Needful instruction; not alone in arts

Which to his humble duties appertain'd,
But in the lore of right and wrong, the rule
Of human kindness, in the peaceful ways
Of honesty, and holiness severe.
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor!
Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's Word,
And an habitual piety, maintain'd
With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the boy of whom I speak
In summer tended cattle on the hills;
But, through the inclement and the perilous days
Of long-continuing winter, he repair'd
To his stepfather's school, that stood alone,
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
Far from the sight of city, spire, or sound
Of minister clock! From that bleak tenement
He, many an evening, to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness, all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travell'd through the wood with no one near
To whom be might confess the things he saw.
So the foundations of his mind were laid,
In such communion, not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time,
Had he perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impress'd
Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
And colour so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and almost seem'd
To haunt the bodily sense. He had received
(Vigorous in native genius as he was)
A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms
And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attain'd
An active power to fasten images
Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
Incesantly to turn his ear and eye
On all things which the moving seasons brought
To feed such appetite: nor this alone
Appeased his yearning—in the after-day

Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
He sate, and e'en in their fix'd lineaments,
Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
Or by creative feeling overborne,
Or by predominance of thought oppress'd,
E'en in their fix'd and steady lineaments
He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
Expression ever varying!
Thus inform'd,
He had small need of books; for many a tale
Traditionary round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
Nourish'd imagination in her growth,
And gave the mind that apprehensive power
By which she is made quick to recognise
The moral properties and scope of things.
But eagerly he read, and read again,
Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied;
The life and death of martyrs, who sustain'd,
With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
Triumphantly display'd in records left
Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour!
And there by lucky hap had been preserved
A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
That left half-told the preternatural tale,
Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends,
Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
Strange and uncouth; dire faces, figures dire,
Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbow'd, and lean-ankled too,
With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
Could never be forgotten!
In his heart,
Where Fear sate thus, a cherish'd visitant,
Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
Or by the silent looks of happy things,
Or flowing from the universal face
Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
Of Nature, and already was prepared
By his intense conceptions, to receive
Deeply the lesson deep of love which he
Whom nature, by whatever means, has taught
To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

From early childhood, even as hath been said,
From his sixth year he had been sent abroad
In summer to tend herds: such was his task

Thenceforward till the later day of youth.
Oh then what soul was his, when, on the tops
Of the high mountains, he beheld the sun
Rise up and bathe the world in light! He look'd—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touch'd,
And in their silent faces did he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him; they swallow'd up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live: they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffer'd no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A herdsman on the lonely mountain-tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes *possess'd*.
Oh! then how beautiful, how bright, appear'd
The written promise. He had early learn'd
To reverence the Volume which displays
The mystery—the life which cannot die:
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith;
There did he see the writing—all things there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving infinite;
There littleness was not; the least of things
Seem'd infinite; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive? Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he call'd those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flow'd: and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works through patience; thence he learn'd,
In many a calmer hour of sober thought,
To look on Nature with a humble heart,
Self-question'd where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

So pass'd the time; yet to the nearest town

He duly went with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book which most had tempted his desires
While at the stall he read. Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song
The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life,
His stepfather supplied; books that explain
The purer elements of truth involved
In lines and numbers, and by charm severe
(Especially perceived where nature droops
And feeling is suppress'd) preserve the mind
Busy in solitude and poverty.
These occupations oftentimes deceived
The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
In pensive idleness. What could he do
With blind endeavours, in that lonesome life,
Thus thirsting daily? Yet still uppermost
Nature was at his heart as if he felt—
Though yet he knew not how—a wasting power
In all things which from her sweet influence
Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
While yet he linger'd in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
To measure th' altitude of some tall crag
That is the eagle's birthplace, or some peak
Familiar with forgotten years, that shews
Inscribed, as with the silence of the thought,
Upon its bleak and visionary sides,
The history of many a winter storm,—
Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus, before his eighteenth year was told,
Accumulated feelings press'd his heart
With an increasing weight; he was o'erpower'd
By Nature, by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul
Communing with the glorious universe.
Full often wish'd he that the winds might rage
When they were silent; far more fondly now
Than in his earlier season did he love
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds
That live in darkness:—from his intellect

And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He ask'd repose; and I have heard him say
That often, failing at this time to gain
The peace required, he scann'd the laws of light
Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
A cloud of mist, which in the sunshine frames
A lasting tablet—for the observer's eye
Varying its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,
And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus, even from childhood upward, was he rear'd:
For intellectual progress wanting much,
Doubtless, of needful help—yet gaining more;
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthen'd and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.
But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summon'd to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him so unworthy maintenance.
The mother strove to make her son perceive
With what advantage he might teach a school
In the adjoining village; but the youth,
Who of this service made a short essay,
Found that the wanderings of his thoughts were then
A misery to him; that he must resign
A task he was unable to perform.

That stern yet kindly spirit who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his native rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales
(Spirit attach'd to regions mountainous
Like their own steadfast clouds)—did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope.
An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
Through dusty ways, in storm, from door to door,
A vagrant merchant bent beneath his load!
Yet do such travellers find their own delight;
And their hard service, deem'd debasing now,
Gain'd merited respect in simpler times,
When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration, all dependent
Upon the Pedlar's toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the youth that still no few
Of his adventurous countrymen were led

By perseverance in this track of life
To competence and ease; to him it bore
Attractions manifold—and this he chose.
He ask'd his mother's blessing; and with tears
Thanking his second father, ask'd from him
Paternal blessings. The good pair bestow'd
Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
Foreboding evil. From his native hills
He wander'd far: much did he see of men,
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions, and their feelings; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
Which 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language. In the woods,
A lone enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in this labour, he had pass'd
The better portion of his time; and there
Spontaneously had his affections thriven
Upon the bounties of the year, and felt
The liberty of Nature; there he kept
In solitude and solitary thought
His mind in a just equipoise of love.
Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
Of ordinary life; unvex'd, unwarp'd
By partial bondage. In his steady course,
No piteous revolutions had he felt,
No wild varieties of joy and grief.
Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
His heart lay open; and, by Nature tuned
And constant disposition of his thoughts
To sympathy with man, he was alive
To all that was enjoy'd where'er he went;
And all that was endur'd; for in himself
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
He had no painful pressure from without
That made him turn aside from wretchedness
With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
That in our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life.
For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
He had observed the progress and decay
Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
The history of many families;
How they had prosper'd; how they were o'erthrown
By passion or mischance; or such misrule
Among the unthinking masters of the earth
As makes the nations groan. This active course,

Chosen in youth, through manhood he pursued,
Till due provision for his modest wants
Had been obtain'd; and, thereupon, resolved
To pass the remnant of his days untask'd
With needless services, from hardship free.
His calling laid aside, he lived at ease:
But still he loved to pace the public roads
And the wild paths; and, when the summer's warmth
Invited him, would often leave his home
And journey far, revisiting those scenes
That to his memory were most endear'd.
Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, untouch'd
By worldly-mindedness or anxious care;
Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refresh'd
By knowledge gather'd up from day to day;—
Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
With whom from childhood he grew up, had held
The strong hand of her purity; and still
Had watch'd him with an unrelenting eye.
This he remember'd in his riper age
With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
But by the native vigour of his mind,
By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
Whate'er in docile childhood or in youth
He had imbibed of fear or darker thought,
Was melted all away: so true was this,
That sometimes his religion seem'd to me
Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods;
Who to the model of his own pure heart
Framed his belief, as grace divine inspired,
Or human reason dictated with awe.
And surely never did there live on earth
A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
And teasing ways of children vex'd not him;
Nor could he bid them from his presence, tired
With questions and importunate demand.
Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
To his fraternal sympathy address'd,
Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb,
Such as might suit a rustic sire prepared
For Sabbath duties; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have pass'd without remark.
Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.

Time had compress'd the freshness of his cheek
Into a narrower circle of deep red;
But had not tamed his eye, that under brows
Shaggy and gray, had meanings which it brought
From years of youth; which, like a being made
Of many beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was he framed: and such his course of life,
Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of relinquish'd toils,
Upon that cottage bench reposed his limbs,
Screen'd from the sun. Supine the wanderer lay,
His eyes as if in drowsiness half-shut,
The shadows of the breezy elms above
Dappling his face. He had not heard my steps
As I approach'd, and near him did I stand
Unnoticed in the shade some minutes' space.
At length I hail'd him, seeing that his hat
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
Had newly scoop'd a running stream. He rose,
And ere the pleasant greeting that ensued
Was ended, "'Tis," said I, "a burning day;
My lips are parch'd with thirst, but you, I guess,
Have somewhere found relief." He, at the word,
Pointing towards a sweet-brier, bade me climb
The fence hard by, where that aspiring shrub
Look'd out upon the road. It was a plot
Of garden-ground run wild, its matted weeds
Mark'd with the steps of those, whom, as they pass'd,
The gooseberry-trees that shot in long lank slips,
Or currants hanging from their leafless stems
In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
The broken wall. I look'd around, and there,
Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
Join'd in a cold damp nook, espied a well
Shrouded with willow-flowers and plumy fern.
My thirst I slaked, and from the cheerless spot
Withdrawing, straightway to the shade return'd
Where sate the old man on the cottage bench;
And while, beside him, with uncover'd head,
I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,
Thus did he speak:—"I see around me here
Things which you cannot see: we die, my friend;
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon

Even of the good is no memorial left.
The poets, in their elegies and songs
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams to mourn.
And senseless rocks; nor idly—for they speak,
In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
And eyed its waters till we seem'd to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness; and they minister'd
To human comfort. As I stoop'd to drink,
Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years; a pensive sight
That moved my heart, recalling former days,
When I could never pass that road but she
Who lived within these walls, at my approach,
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oh! sir, the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the sockets. Many a passenger
Hath bless'd poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring; and no one came
But he was welcome; no one went away
But that it seem'd she loved him. She is dead,
The light extinguish'd of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandon'd to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave!

"I speak," continued he, "of one whose stock
Of virtues bloom'd beneath this lowly roof.
She was a woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love,
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A being, who, by adding love to peace,
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded partner lack'd not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart;
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal

Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanish'd. They who pass'd
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light
Had fail'd, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark edges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope,—next to the God in heaven.

"Not twenty years ago, but you, I think,
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war;
This happy land was stricken to the heart!
A wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
The hardships of that season; many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not. Meanwhile abridged
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous years
With cheerful hope; but ere the second autumn
Her life's true help-mate on a sick-bed lay,
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He linger'd long; and when his strength return'd,
He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age,
Was all consumed. Two children had they now,
One newly born. As I have said, it was
A time of trouble: shoals of artisans
Were from their daily labour turn'd adrift
To seek their bread from public charity,
They, and their wives and children—happier far
Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedges, or the kite
That makes his dwelling on the mountain rocks!

"A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
This lonely cottage. At his door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them: or with his knife
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks;

Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy novelty,
He blended, where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not; his good-humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
And poverty brought on a pettish mood
And a sore temper: day by day he droop'd,
And he would leave his work, and to the town
Without an errand, would direct his steps;
Or wander here and there among the fields.
One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
And with a cruel tongue; at other times
He toss'd them with a false, unnatural joy:
And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children, 'Every smile,'
Said Margaret to me here beneath these trees,
'Made my heart bleed.'"

At this the wanderer paused;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, "'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour, when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
Is filling all the air with melody;
Why should a tear be in an old man's eye?
Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
And in the weakness of humanity,
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears,
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?"

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection; and that simple tale
Pass'd from my mind like a forgotten sound.
A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye
So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seem'd present; and, attention now relax'd,

There was a heart-felt chillness in my veins.
I rose; and, turning from the breezy shade,
Went forth into the open air, and stood
To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.
Long time I had not stay'd,—ere, looking round
Upon that tranquil ruin, I return'd,
And begg'd of the old man that, for my sake,
He would resume his story.
He replied,
"It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
A momentary pleasure, never mark'd
By reason, barren of all future good.
But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
A power to virtue friendly: were 't not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed
An idle dreamer! 'Tis a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form. But, without further bidding,
I will proceed.
"While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessèd home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote;
And glad I was, when, halting by yon gate
That leads from the green lane, once more I saw
These lofty elm-trees. Long I did not rest:
With many pleasant thoughts I cheer'd my way
O'er the flat common. Having reach'd the door,
I knock'd; and when I enter'd with the hope
Of usual greeting, Margaret look'd at me
A little while; then turn'd her head away
Speechless; and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Or how to speak to her. Poor wretch! at last
She rose from off her seat, and then,—oh, sir!
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name.
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seem'd to cling upon me, she inquired
If I had seen her husband. As she spake,
A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
Nor had I power to answer ere she told
That he had disappear'd—not two months gone,
He left his house; two wretched days had pass'd,

And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
She open'd—found no writing, but therein
Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
Silver and gold—'I shudder'd at the sight,'
Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
Which placed it there; and, ere that day was ended,
That long and anxious day! I learn'd from one
Sent hither by my husband to impart
The heavy news, that he had join'd a troop
Of soldiers going to a distant land.
He left me thus—he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he fear'd
That I should follow with my babes, and sink
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'

"This tale did Margaret tell with many tears;
And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
To cheer us both; but long we had not talk'd,
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she look'd around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted. 'Twas the time of early spring;
I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o'er that fence she look'd,
And, while I paced along the footway-path,
Call'd out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness; and with a voice
That seem'd the very sound of happy thoughts.

"I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustom'd load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood, and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the 'trotting brooks' and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that pass'd between,
And disappear'd. I journey'd back this way
Toward the wane of summer; when the wheat
Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,

I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, I thought,
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop, suffer'd to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew,
Blinding the lower panes. I turn'd aside,
And stroll'd into her garden. It appear'd
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. From the border lines,
Composed of daisy and resplendent thrift,
Flowers straggling forth had on these paths encroach'd,
Which they were used to deck: carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads without support.
The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
Had twined about her two small rows of pease,
And dragg'd them to the earth. Ere this an hour
Was wasted. Back I turn'd my restless steps,
A stranger pass'd; and, guessing whom I sought,
He said that she was used to ramble far.
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud;
Then, like a blast that dies away self-still'd,
The voice was silent. From the bench I rose;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
The longer I remain'd, more desolate.
And, looking round, I saw the corner stones,
Till then unnoticed, on either side the door
With dull red stains discolour'd, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
That fed upon the common, thither came
Familiarly; and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms: the cottage-clock struck eight;
I turn'd, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin, her figure too
Was changed. As she unlock'd the door, she said,
'It grieves me you have waited here so long,
But, in good truth, I've wander'd much of late,
And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
Of my best prayers to bring me back again.'
While on the board she spread our evening meal,
She told me—interrupting not the work

Which gave employment to her listless hands—
That she had parted with her elder child,
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed—'I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
I have been travelling far; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
And to myself,' said she, 'have done much wrong
And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my tears
Have flow'd as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that Heaven
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.' It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her; sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart: I fear
'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor woman: so familiarly
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on one
By sorrow laid asleep, or borne away;
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffer'd. Yes, it would have grieved
Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids droop'd, her eyes were downward cast;
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house affairs, appear'd
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sigh'd,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

"Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
Which with a look of welcome she received;

And I exhorted her to have her trust
In God's good love, and seek His help by prayer.
I took my staff, and when I kiss'd her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
With the best hope and comfort I could give.
She thank'd me for my wish; but for my hope
It seem'd she did not thank me.
"I return'd,
And took my rounds along this road again
Ere on its sunny bank the primrose flower
Peep'd forth to give an earnest of the spring.
I found her sad and drooping; she had learn'd
No tidings of her husband; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seem'd the same
In person and appearance; but her house
Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence.
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which in the cottage window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now with straggling leaves
Lay scatter'd here and there, open or shut
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant babe
Had from its mother caught the trick of grief,
And sigh'd among its playthings. Once again
I turn'd towards the garden gate, and saw,
More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
The harden'd soil, and knots of wither'd grass;
No ridges there appear'd of clear black mould,
No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
It seem'd the better part were gnaw'd away,
Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender stem
Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.' Towards the house
Together we return'd, and she inquired
If I had any hope:—but for her babe,
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live—that she must die
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place; his Sunday garments hung
Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
Stood undisturb'd behind the door. And when,

In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds, and gain'd,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself;
And for this end had hired a neighbour's boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walk'd with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her, begg'd
That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
Our final parting; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I return'd
Into this tract again.

"Nine tedious years
From their first separation—nine long years,
She linger'd in unquiet widowhood;
A wife and widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my friend,
That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant Sabbath-day,
And if a dog pass'd by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its gray line;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there pass'd
A man whose garments shew'd the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task; and she with falt'ring voice
Made many a fond inquiry; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully;
Most happy, if, from aught discover'd there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor hut
Sank to decay: for he was gone whose hand
At the first nipping of October frost,

Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequer'd the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapp'd; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
Her tatter'd clothes were ruffled by the wind;
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endear'd,
Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my friend,
In sickness she remain'd; and here she died,
Last human tenant of these ruin'd walls!"

The old man ceased: he saw that I was moved;
From that low bench, rising instinctively,
I turn'd aside in weakness, nor had power
To thank him for the tale which he had told.
I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall,
Review'd that woman's sufferings; and it seem'd
To comfort me, while, with a brother's love,
I bless'd her in the impotence of grief.
At length towards the cottage I return'd
Fondly,—and traced, with interest more mild,
That secret spirit of humanity
Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
Of Nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
And silent overgrowings, still survived.
The old man, noting this, resumed, and said,
"My friend, enough to sorrow you have given;
The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
Be wise and cheerful; and no longer read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye.
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silver'd o'er
As once I pass'd, did to my heart convey
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and look'd so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which fill'd my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing shows of being leave behind,
Appear'd an idle dream, that could not live
Where meditation was. I turn'd away,
And walk'd along my road in happiness."

He ceased. Ere long the sun, declining, shot

A slant and mellow radiance, which began
To fall upon us, while beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench: and now we felt,
Admonish'd thus, the sweet hour coming on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The old man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
Of hopeful preparation, grasp'd his staff;
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the shade;
And, ere the stars were visible, had reach'd
A village inn,—our evening resting-place.

BOOK II.

THE SOLITARY.

The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake—Wanderer's account of a friend whom he purposes to visit—View, from an eminence, of the valley which his friend had chosen for his retreat—Sound of singing from below—a funeral procession—Descent into the valley—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the valley—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district—Solitary contrasts with this that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage—The cottage entered—Description of the Solitary's apartment—Repast there—View from the window of two mountain summits—and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind—Quit the house.

In days of yore how fortunately fared
The minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheer'd with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armèd knight,
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook; beneath an abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodged; the next
Humbly in a religious hospital;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
He walk'd protected from the sword of war,
By virtue of that sacred instrument,
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side:
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went,
Opening from land to land an easy way

By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honour'd race
Drew happier, loftier, more impassion'd thoughts
From his long journeyings and eventful life,
Than this obscure itinerant (an obscure
But high-soul'd and tender-hearted man)
Had skill to draw from many a ramble, far
And wide protracted through the tamer ground
Of these our unimaginative days;
Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
Accoutred with his burthen and his staff;
And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite school
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
Look'd on this guide with reverential love!
Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
Our journey—beneath favourable skies.
Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, which did not yield to him
Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
Which Nature's various objects might supply;
And in the silence of his face I read
His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
In his capacious mind he loved them all:
Their rights acknowledging, he felt for all.
Oft was occasion given me to perceive
How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd
To happy contemplation soothed his walk
Along the field, and in the shady grove;
How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
Its course of suffering in the public road.
Sad contrast! all too often smote his heart
With unavailing pity. Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was, himself,
To the degree that he desired, beloved.
Greetings and smiles we met with all day long,
From faces that we knew; we took our seats
By many a cottage hearth, where he received
The welcome of an inmate from afar.
Nor was he loath to enter ragged huts,
Wherein his charity was bless'd; his voice

Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
And, sometimes—where the poor man held dispute
With his own mind, unable to subdue
Impatience, through inaptness to perceive
General distress in his particular lot:
Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
Struggling against it, with a soul perplex'd,
And finding in itself no steady power
To draw the line of comfort that divides
Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
From the injustice of our brother men—
To him appeal was made as to a judge;
Who, with an understanding heart, allay'd
The perturbation; listen'd to the plea;
Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave,
So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
With soften'd spirit—even when it condemn'd.

Such intercourse I witness'd while we roved
Now as his choice directed, now as mine;
Or both, with equal readiness of will,
Our course submitting to the changeful breeze
Of accident. But when the rising sun
Had three times call'd us to renew our walk,
My fellow-traveller said, with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,
That I must yield myself without reserve
To his disposal. Glad was I of this.
We started,—and he led me towards the hills;
Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
Before us, mountains stern and desolate;
But in the majesty of distance now
Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
Of aspect, with aërial softness clad,
And beautified with morning's purple beams.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise;
And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
Shall lack not their enjoyment: but how faint
Compared with ours, who, pacing side by side,
Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
That we beheld; and lend the listening sense
To every grateful sound of earth and air—
Pausing at will: our spirits braced, our thoughts
Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown,
And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

Mount slowly, sun! and may our journey lie
A while within the shadow of this hill,
This friendly hill, a shelter from thy beams!
Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish:
And as that wish, with prevalence of thanks
For present good o'er fear of future ill,
Stole in among the morning's blither thoughts,
'Twas chased away, for tow'rds the western side
Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
We saw a throng of people—wherefore met?
Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
On the thrill'd ear, did to the question yield
Prompt answer; they proclaim the annual wake,
Which the bright season favours. Tabor and pipe
In purpose join to hasten and reprove
The laggard rustic; and repay with boons
Of merriment a particolour'd knot,
Already form'd upon the village green.
Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
By the broad hill, glisten'd upon our sight
That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
Casement, and cottage roof, and stems of trees
Half-veil'd in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
Of gold, the maypole shines; as if the rays
Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
With gladsome influence could reanimate
The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, "The music and the sprightly scene
Invite us! shall we quit our road, and join
These festive matins?" He replied, "Not loath
Here would I linger, and with you partake,
Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
The simple pastimes of the day and place.
By the fleet racers, ere the sun be set,
The turf of yon large pasture will be skimm'd;
There, too, the lusty wrestlers will contend;
But know we not that he who intermits
Th' appointed task and duties of the day,
Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day,
Checking the finer spirits that refuse
To flow when purposes are lightly changed?
We must proceed, a length of journey yet
Remains untraced." Then, pointing with his staff
Towards those craggy summits, his intent
He thus imparted:—

"In a spot that lies
Among yon mountain fastnesses conceal'd,
You will receive, before the hour of noon,
Good recompence, I hope, for this day's toil—
From sight of one who lives secluded there,
Lonesome and lost: of whom, and whose past life
(Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
More faithfully collected from himself,)
This brief communication shall suffice.

"Though now sojourning there, he, like myself,
Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage
Among the wilds of Scotland; in a tract
Where many a shelter'd and well-tended plant,
Upon the humblest ground of social life,
Doth at this day, I trust, the blossoms bear
Of piety and simple innocence.
Such grateful promises his youth display'd;
And, as he shew'd in study forward zeal,
All helps were sought, all measures strain'd, that he
By due scholastic discipline prepared,
Might to the ministry be call'd; which done,
Partly through lack of better hopes—and part,
Perhaps, incited by a curious mind,
In early life he undertook the charge
Of chaplain to a military troop,
Cheer'd by the Highland bagpipe, as they march'd
In plaided vest—his fellow-countrymen.
This office filling, and by native power,
And force of native inclination, made
An intellectual ruler in the haunts
Of social vanity, he walk'd the world,
Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety;
Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roam'd
Where fortune led: and Fortune, who oft proves
The careless wanderer's friend, to him made known
A blooming lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness,
Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win.

"For this fair bride, most rich in gifts of mind,
Nor sparingly endow'd with worldly wealth,
His office he relinquish'd; and retired
From the world's notice to a rural home.
Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past,
And she was in youth's prime. How full their joy!—
How free their love!—nor did their love decay,
Nor joy abate, till,—pitiable doom!

In the short course of one undreaded year
Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'erthrew
Two lovely children—all that they possessed!
The mother follow'd: miserably bare
The one survivor stood; he wept, he pray'd
For his dismissal, day and night—compell'd
By pain to turn his thoughts towards the grave,
And face the regions of eternity.
An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish; and, indifferent to delight,
To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
To private interest dead, and public care.
So lived he: so he might have died.
"But now,
To the wide world's astonishment appear'd,
The glorious opening, the unlook'd-for dawn,
That promised everlasting joy to France!
That sudden light had power to pierce the gloom
In which his spirit, friendless upon earth,
In separation dwelt, and solitude.
The voice of social transport reach'd even him!
He broke from his contracted bounds, repair'd
To the great city, an emporium then
Of golden expectations, and receiving
Freights, every day, from a new world of hope.
Thither his popular talents he transferr'd!
And, from the pulpit, zealously maintain'd
The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
As one, and moving to one glorious end.
Intoxicating service! I might say
A happy service; for he was sincere
As vanity and fondness for applause,
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

"That righteous cause of freedom did, we know,
Combine for one hostility, as friends,
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves;
Was served by rival advocates that came
From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
One courage seem'd to animate them all:
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gain'd
By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence
In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And its discernment; not alone in rights,
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith reveal'd.
An overweening trust was raised; and fear

Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose subtle bane
The strongest did not easily escape;
And he, what wonder? took a mortal taint.
How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
That he broke faith with them whom he had laid
In earth's dark chambers with a Christian's hope!
An infidel contempt of Holy Writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind; and hence
Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced;
Vilest hypocrisy, the laughing, gay
Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.
Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls;
But, for disciples of the inner school,
Old freedom was old servitude, and they
The wisest whose opinions stoop'd the least
To known restraints, and who most boldly drew
Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
Which, in the light of false philosophy,
Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
Widening its circle as the storms advance.

"His sacred function was at length renounced,
And every day and every place enjoy'd
The unshackled layman's natural liberty;
Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
I do not wish to wrong him; though the course
Of private life licentiously display'd
Unhallow'd actions—planted like a crown
Upon the insolent aspiring brow
Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
Of prejudice subdued—he still retain'd,
'Mid much abasement, what he had received
From nature—an intense and glowing mind.
Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
And mortal sickness on her face appear'd,
He colour'd objects to his own desire
As with a lover's passion. Yet his moods
Of pain were keen as those of better men,
Nay, keener, as his fortitude was less:
And he continued, when worse days were come,
To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal
That shew'd like happiness; but, in despite
Of all this outside bravery, within
He neither felt encouragement nor hope:
For moral dignity and strength of mind
Were wanting, and simplicity of life,
And reverence for himself; and, last and best,

Confiding thoughts, through love and fear of Him,
Before whose sight the troubles of this world
Are vain as billows in a tossing sea.

"The glory of the times fading away—
The splendour, which had given a festal air
To self-importance, hallow'd it, and veil'd
From his own sight, this gone, therewith he lost
All joy in human nature; was consumed,
And vex'd, and chafed, by levity and scorn,
And fruitless indignation; gall'd by pride;
Made desperate by contempt of men who throve
Before his sight in power or fame, and won,
Without desert, what he desired; weak men,
Too weak even for his envy or his hate!
And thus beset, and finding in himself
Nor pleasure nor tranquillity, at last,
After a wandering course of discontent
In foreign lands, and inwardly oppress'd
With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
By weariness of life—he fix'd his home,
Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours
In self-indulging spleen, that doth not want
Its own voluptuousness—on this resolved,
With this content—that he will live and die
Forgotten,—at safe distance from 'a world
Not moving to his mind.'"
These serious words
Closed the preparatory notices
With which my fellow-traveller had beguiled
The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.
Now, suddenly diverging, he began
To climb, upon its western side, a ridge,
Pathless and smooth, a long and steep ascent;
As if the object of his quest had been
Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall
Of water, or some boastful eminence
Renown'd for splendid prospect far and wide.
We clomb without a tract to guide our steps,
And, on the summit, reach'd a healthy plain,
With a tumultuous waste of huge hill-tops
Before us; savage region! and I walk'd
In weariness; when, all at once, behold!
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains; even as if the spot
Had been, from eldest time, by wish of theirs

So placed,—to be shut out from all the world!
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
With rocks encompass'd, save that to the south
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close.
A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,
A liquid pool, that glitter'd in the sun,
And one bare dwelling; one abode, no more!
It seem'd the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want: the little fields, made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
There crows the cock, single in his domain:
The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighbouring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill-tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

"Ah! what a sweet recess," thought I, "is here!"
Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease
Upon a bed of heath—"full many a spot
Of hidden beauty have I chanced t' espy
Among the mountains; never one like this;
So lonesome, and so perfectly secure:
Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
And bright, and fertile, furnish'd in itself
With the few needful things that life requires.
In rugged arms how soft it seems to lie,
How tenderly protected! Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness; were this
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
It could not be more quiet: peace is here
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private; years that pass
Forgetfully; uncall'd upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain."

On these and other kindred thoughts intent,
In silence by my comrade's side I lay,
He also silent: when, from out the heart
Of that profound abyss, a solemn voice,
Or several voices in one solemn sound,
Was heard ascending; mournful, deep, and slow
The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge!
We listen'd, looking down towards the hut,
But seeing no one: meanwhile from below
The strain continued, spiritual as before;

And now distinctly could I recognize
These words:—"*Shall in the grave thy love be known,*
In death thy faithfulness?" "God rest his soul!"
The Wand'rer cried, abruptly breaking silence;
"He is departed, and finds peace at last!"

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
Not ceasing, forth appear'd in view a band
Of rustic persons from behind the hut,
Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
They shaped their course along the sloping side
Of that small valley, singing as they moved;
A sober company and few, the men
Bareheaded, and all decently attired.
Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
Ended; and, from the stillness that ensued
Recovering, to my friend I said, "You spake,
Methought, with apprehension that these rites
Are paid to him upon whose shy retreat
This day we purposed to intrude." "I did so;
But let us hence, that we may learn the truth.
Perhaps it is not he, but some one else,
For whom this pious service is perform'd;
Some other tenant of the solitude."

So, to a steep and difficult descent
Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to crag,
Where passage could be won; and, as the last
Of the mute train upon the heathy top
Of that off-sloping outlet disappear'd,
I, more impatient in the course I took,
Had landed upon easy ground, and there
Stood waiting for my comrade. When, behold
An object that enticed my steps aside!
It was an entry, narrow as a door,
A passage whose brief windings open'd out
Into a platform, that lay, sheepfold-wise,
Enclosed between a single mass of rock
And one old moss-grown wall; a cool recess,
And fanciful! For, where the rock and wall
Met in an angle, hung a tiny roof,
Or penthouse, which most quaintly had been framed
By thrusting two rude sticks into the wall
And overlaying them with mountain sods;
To weather-fend a little turf-built seat,
Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor dread
The burning sunshine, or a transient shower;
But the whole plainly wrought by children's hands!
Whose simple skill had throng'd the grassy floor
With work of frame less solid, a proud show

Of baby-houses, curiously arranged;
Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,
I could not choose but beckon to my guide,
Who, having enter'd, carelessly look'd round,
And now would have pass'd on, when I exclaim'd,
"Lo! what is here?" and, stooping down, drew forth
A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss,
And wreck of particolour'd earthenware,
Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise
One of those petty structures. "Gracious Heaven!"
The Wanderer cried, "it cannot but be his,
And he is gone!" The book, which in my hand
Had open'd of itself, (for it was swoln
With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
To th' injurious elements exposed
From week to week,) I found to be a work
In the French tongue, a novel of Voltaire,
His famous "Optimist." "Unhappy man!"
Exclaim'd my friend; "here, then, has been to him
Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place
Within how deep a shelter! He had fits,
Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
And loved the haunts of children; here, no doubt,
He sometimes play'd with them; and here hath sate
Far oft'ner by himself. This book, I guess,
Hath been forgotten in his careless way,
Left here when he was occupied in mind,
And by the cottage children has been found.
Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate work;
To what odd purpose have the darlings turn'd
This sad memorial of their hapless friend!"

"Me," said I, "most doth it surprise, to find
Such book in such a place!" "A book it is,"
He answer'd, "to the person suited well,
Though little suited to surrounding things;
Nor, with the knowledge which my mind possess'd,
Could I behold it undisturb'd: 'tis strange,
I grant, and stranger still had been to see
The man who was its owner dwelling here
With one poor shepherd, far from all the world!
Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
As from these intimations I forbode,
Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
And least of all for him who is no more."

By this, the book was in the old man's hand:
And he continued, glancing on the leaves

An eye of scorn:—"The lover," said he, "doom'd
To love when hope hath fail'd him, whom no depth
Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
And that is joy to him. When change of times
Hath summon'd kings to scaffolds, do but give
The faithful servant, who must hide his head
Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
And he too hath his comforter. How poor
Beyond all poverty, how destitute,
Must that man have been left, who, hither driven,
Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
No dearer relic, and no better stay,
Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
Impure conceits discharging from a heart
Harden'd by impious pride! I did not fear
To tax you with this journey," mildly said
My venerable friend, as forth we stepp'd
Into the presence of the cheerful light;
"For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
From moving spectacles; but let us on."
So speaking, on he went, and at the word
I follow'd, till he made a sudden stand;
For full in view, approaching through the gate,
That open'd from the enclosure of green fields
Into the rough uncultivated ground,
Behold the man whom he had fancied dead!
I knew, from the appearance and the dress,
That it could be no other: a pale face,
A tall and meagre person, in a garb
Not rustic,—dull and faded like himself!
He saw us not, though distant but few steps;
For he was busy dealing from a store,
Which on a leaf he carried in his hand,
Strings of ripe currants; gift by which he strove,
With intermixture of endearing words,
To soothe a child who walk'd beside him, weeping
As if disconsolate. "They to the grave
Are bearing him, my little one," he said—
"To the dark pit, but he will feel no pain;
His body is at rest, his soul in heaven."

Glad was my comrade now, though he at first,
I doubt not, had been more surprised than glad.
But now, recover'd from the shock, and calm,
He soberly advanced, and to the man
Gave cordial greeting. Vivid was the light
Which flash'd at this from out the other's eyes;

He was all fire: the sickness from his face
Pass'd like a fancy that is swept away.
Hands join'd he with his visitant,—a grasp,
An eager grasp; and, many moments' space,
When the first glow of pleasure was no more,
And much of what had vanish'd was return'd,
An amicable smile retain'd the life,
Which it had unexpectedly received,
Upon his hollow cheek. "How kind," he said;
"Nor could your coming have been better timed;
For this, you see, is in our narrow world
A day of sorrow. I have here a charge"—
And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
The sunburnt forehead of the weeping child—
"A little mourner, whom it is my task
To comfort; but how came ye? If yon track
(Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
Ye could not miss the funeral train; they yet
Have scarcely disappear'd." "This blooming child,"
Said the old man, "is of an age to weep
At any grave or solemn spectacle;
Inly distress'd, or overpower'd with awe,
He knows not why; but he, perchance, this day
Is shedding orphan's tears; and you yourself
Must have sustain'd a loss." "The hand of Death,"
He answer'd, "has been here; but could not well
Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
Upon myself." The other left these words
Unnoticed, thus continuing:—

"From yon crag,
Down whose steep sides we dropp'd into the vale,
We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
Heard anywhere, but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! Many precious rites
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
Will last for ever. Oft have I stopp'd
When on my way, I could not choose but stop,
So much I felt the awfulness of life,
In that one moment when the corse is lifted
In silence, with a hush of decency,
Then from the threshold moves with song of peace,
And confidential yearnings, to its home,
Its final home in earth. What traveller—who
(How far soe'er a stranger) does not own
The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
A mute procession, on the houseless road,
Or passing by some single tenement

Or cluster'd dwellings, where again they raise
The monitory voice? But most of all
It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
Then, when the body, soon to be consign'd
Ashes to ashes, dust bequeath'd to dust,
Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne
Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
The nearest in affection or in blood;
Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
In silent grief their unuplifted heads,
And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful plaint,
And that most awful scripture which declares
We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed!
Have I not seen?—ye likewise may have seen
Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side,
And son and father, also side by side,
Rise from that posture; and in concert move,
On the green turf following the vested priest,
Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
From which they do not shrink, and under which
They faint not, but advance towards the grave
Step after step—together, with their firm
Unhidden faces; he that suffers most,
He outwardly, and inwardly, perhaps,
The most serene, with most undaunted eye;
Oh! blest are they who live and die like these,
Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourn'd!

"That poor man taken hence to-day," replied
The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile,
Which did not please me, "must be deem'd, I fear,
Of the unblest; for he will surely sink
Into his mother earth without such pomp
Of grief, depart without occasion given
By him for such array of fortitude.
Full seventy winters hath he lived—and mark!
This simple child will mourn his one short hour,
And I shall miss him; scanty tribute! yet,
This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
If love were his sole claim upon their care,
Like a ripe date which in the desert falls
Without a hand to gather it." At this
I interposed, though loath to speak, and said,
"Can it be thus, among so small a band
As ye must needs be here? In such a place
I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight
Of a departing cloud." "'Twas not for love,"
Answer'd the sick man, with a careless voice,

"That I came hither; neither have I found
Among associates who have power of speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here,
Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first resolve."
Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
To my benign companion,—"Pity 'tis
That fortune did not guide you to this house
A few days earlier; then would you have seen
What stuff the dwellers in this solitude
(That seems by Nature framed to be the seat
And very bosom of pure innocence)
Are made of; an ungracious matter this!
Which, for truth's sake, yet in remembrance, too,
Of past discussions with this zealous friend
And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice; undeterr'd
By the example of his own pure course,
And that respect and deference which a soul
May fairly claim, by niggard age enrich'd
In what it values most—the love of God
And His frail creature man; but ye shall hear.
I talk—and ye are standing in the sun
Without refreshment!"

Saying this he led
Towards the cottage: homely was the spot,
And to my feeling, ere we reach'd the door,
Had almost a forbidding nakedness;
Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appear'd when from the valley's brink
We had look'd down upon it. All within,
As left by the departed company,
Was silent; and the solitary clock
Tick'd, as I thought, with melancholy sound.
Following our guide, we clomb the cottage stairs
And reach'd a small apartment dark and low,
Which was no sooner enter'd than our host
Said gaily, "This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin—what you will;
I love it better than a snail his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our best."
So, with more ardour than an unripe girl
Left one day mistress of her mother's stores,
He went about his hospitable task.
My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less;
And pleased I look'd upon my gray-hair'd friend,
As if to thank him; he return'd that look,
Cheer'd plainly, and yet serious. What a wreck
We had around us! scatter'd was the floor,

And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
With books, maps, fossils, wither'd plants and flowers,
And tufts of mountain moss; and here and there,
Lay, intermix'd with these, mechanic tools,
And scraps of paper,—some I could perceive
Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-rod
And shatter'd telescope, together link'd
By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook;
And instruments of music, some half-made,
Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the walls.
But speedily the promise was fulfill'd;
A feast before us, and a courteous host
Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
By which it had been bleach'd, o'erspread the board;
And was itself half-cover'd with a load
Of dainties,—oaten bread, curds, cheese, and cream,
And cakes of butter curiously emboss'd,
Butter that had imbibed a golden tinge,
A hue like that of yellow meadow flowers
Faintly reflected in a silent pool.
Nor lack'd, for more delight on that warm day,
Our table small parade of garden fruits,
And whortle-berries from the mountain-sides.
The child, who long ere this had still'd his sobs,
Was now a help to his late comforter,
And moved, a willing page, as he was bid,
Ministering to our need.
In genial mood,
While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
Fronting the window of that little cell,
I could not ever and anon forbear
To glance an upward look on two huge peaks,
That from some other vale peer'd into this.
"Those lusty twins, on which your eyes are cast,"
Exclaim'd our host, "if here you dwelt, would be
Your prized companions. Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm
Rides high; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow
Like smoke along the level of the blast,
In mighty current; theirs, too, is the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails;
And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting: nor have Nature's laws

Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer tone; a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence,—though there be no voice; the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
And have an answer—thither come, and shape
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
And idle spirits: there the sun himself,
At the calm close of summer's longest day,
Rests his substantial orb; between those heights,
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agents stirring there:—alone
Here do I sit and watch."

With bright'ning face
The Wanderer heard him speaking thus, and said,
"Now for the tale with which you threaten'd us!"
"In truth the threat escaped me unawares,
And was forgotten. Let this challenge stand
For my excuse, if what I shall relate
Tire your attention. Outcast and cut off
As we seem here, and must have seem'd to you
When ye look'd down upon us from the crag,
Islanders of a stormy mountain sea,
We are not so; perpetually we touch
Upon the vulgar ordinance of the world,
And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
Relinquish'd, was dependent for his bread
Upon the laws of public charity.
The housewife, tempted by such slender gains
As might from that occasion be distill'd,
Open'd, as she before had done for me,
Her doors t' admit this homeless pensioner;
The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare
Which appetite required—a blind dull nook
Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest!
This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
Ill borne in earlier life: but his was now
The still contentedness of seventy years.
Calm did he sit beneath the wide-spread tree
Of his old age; and yet less calm and meek,
Winningly meek or venerably calm,
Than slow and torpid; paying in this wise
A penalty, if penalty it were,
For spendthrift feats, excesses of his prime.
I loved the old man, for I pitied him.

A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes;
Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way,
And useful to his utmost power: and there
Our housewife knew full well what she possess'd;
He was her vassal of all labour, till'd
Her garden, from the pasture fetch'd her kine;
And, one among the orderly array
Of haymakers, beneath the burning sun
Maintain'd his place; or heedfully pursued
His course, on errands bound to other vales,
Leading sometimes an inexperienced child
Too young for any profitable task.
So moved he like a shadow that perform'd
Substantial service. Mark me now, and learn
For what reward. The moon her monthly round
Hath not completed since our dame, the queen
Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rush'd,—
Voice to a rueful treble humanized,
And features in deplorable dismay:
I treat the matter lightly, but alas!
It is most serious. From mid-noon the rain
Had fallen in torrents; all the mountain-tops
Were hidden, and black vapours coursed their sides;
This had I seen, and saw; but, till she spake,
Was wholly ignorant that my ancient friend—
Who at her bidding, early and alone,
Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland turf
For winter fuel, to his noontide meal
Came not, and now perchance upon the heights
Lay at the mercy of this raging storm.
"Inhuman!" said I; "was an old man's life
Not worthy the trouble of a thought—alas!
This notice comes to late." With joy I saw
Her husband enter, from a distant vale.
We sallied forth together; found the tools
Which the neglected veteran had dropp'd,
But through all quarters look'd for him in vain.
We shouted—but no answer! Darkness fell
Without remission of the blast or shower,
And fears for our own safety drove us home.
I, who weep little, did, I will confess,
The moment I was seated here alone,
Honour my little cell with some few tears
Which anger and resentment could not dry.
All night the storm endured; and, soon as help
Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,

With morning we renew'd our quest: the wind
Was fall'n, the rain abated, but the hills
Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist;
And long and hopelessly we sought in vain,
Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass
A heap of ruin, almost without walls
And wholly without roof (in ancient time
It was a chapel, a small edifice,
In which the peasants of these lonely dells
For worship met upon that central height)—
Chancing to pass this wreck of stones, we there
Espied at last the object of our search,
Couch'd in a nook, and seemingly alive.
It would have moved you, had you seen the guise
In which he occupied his chosen bed,
Lying full three parts buried among tufts
Of heath-plant under and above him strown,
To baffle, as he might, the watery storm:
And there we found him breathing peaceably;
Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
'Mid a green haycock in a sunny field.
We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
At our entreaty; less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.
So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight the shepherds homeward moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, open'd to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
Though I am conscious that no power of words
Can body forth, no hues of speech can paint
That gorgeous spectacle—too bright and fair
Even for remembrance; yet the attempt may give
Collateral interest to this homely tale.
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building—sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seem'd of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes and silver spires:
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements, that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought

Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks, and emerald
turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous enwrapp'd.
Right in the midst, where interspace appear'd
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fix'd; and fix'd resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power,
For admiration and mysterious awe.
Below me was the earth; this little vale,
Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
I saw not, but I felt, that it was there.
That which I *saw* was the reveal'd abode
Of spirits in beatitude: my heart
Swell'd in my breast. 'I have been dead,' I cried,
'And now I live! Oh! wherefore do I live?'
And with that pang I pray'd to be no more!
But I forget our charge—as utterly
I then forgot him—there I stood and gazed;
The apparition faded not away,
And I descended. Having reach'd the house,
I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
And in serene possession of himself,
Beside a genial fire that seem'd to spread
A gleam of comfort o'er his pallid face.
Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
Was glad to find her conscience set at ease;
And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
That the poor sufferer had escaped with life.
But, though he seem'd at first to have received
No harm, and, uncomplaining as before,
Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
Soon shew'd itself; he linger'd three short weeks;
And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.

"So ends my dolorous tale, and glad I am
That it is ended." At these words he turn'd—
And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
Brought from the cupboard wine and stouter cheer,
Like one who would be merry. Seeing this
My gray-hair'd friend said courteously—"Nay, nay,
You have regaled us as a hermit ought;
Now let us forth into the sun!" Our host
Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

BOOK III.

DESPONDENCY.

Images in the Valley—Another recess in it entered and described—Wanderer's sensations—Solitary's excited by the same objects—Contrast between these—Despondency of the Solitary gently reproved—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own history at length—His domestic felicity—Afflictions—Dejection—Roused by the French Revolution—Disappointment and disgust—Voyage to America—Disappointment and disgust pursue him—His return—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of mankind.

A HUMMING bee—a little tinkling rill—
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
By each and all of these the pensive ear
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage threshold we had pass'd,
And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
Once more beneath the concave of the blue
And cloudless sky. Anon, exclaim'd our host,
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
The shade of discontent which on his brow
Had gather'd,—"Ye have left my cell—but see
Now Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you?—how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endow'd,
That the brief hours which yet remain may reap
Some recompence of knowledge or delight?"
So saying, round he look'd, as if perplex'd;
And, to remove those doubts, my gray-hair'd friend
Said—"Shall we take this pathway for our guide?—
Upwards it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashion'd by the flock
A place of refuge seeking at the root

Of yon black yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag
From which it draws its meagre sustenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source;
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crown'd with flow'rets and green herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
Like human life from darkness." At the word
We follow'd where he led. A sudden turn
Through a straight passage of encumber'd ground,
Proved that such hope was vain: for now we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused
O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barr'd. "And who,"
Thought I, "if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly detain'd?
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time."

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground,
The hidden nook discover'd to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturn'd,—that rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars: and, from these
Some little space disjoin'd, a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth.
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appear'd,
Conspicuously station'd, one fair plant,
A tall and shining holly, that had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun,
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that enter'd. But no breeze did now
Find entrance; high or low appear'd no trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
And softly creeping, like a breath of air,

Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

"Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy!" Praise to this effect
Broke from the happy old man's reverend lips;
Who to the Solitary turn'd, and said,
"In sooth, with love's familiar privilege,
You have decried, in no unseemly terms
Of modesty, that wealth which is your own.
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
To lonely nature's casual work; they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
From its fantastic birthplace! And I own,
Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
I cannot but incline to a belief
That in these shows a chronicle survives
Of purposes akin to those of man,
But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails.
Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
With timid lapse; and lo! while in this strait
I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
Or to pass through, but rather an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide;
And whose soft gloom and boundless depth might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.
Hail contemplation! from the stately towers,
Rear'd by th' industrious hand of human art
To lift thee high above the misty air,
And turbulence of murmuring cities vast;
From academic groves, that have for thee
Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
To which thou mayest resort for holier peace,—
From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
Mayest penetrate, wherever truth shall lead;
Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
Of time and conscious nature disappear,
Lost in unsearchable eternity!"

A pause ensued; and with minuter care
We scann'd the various features of the scene:
And soon the tenant of that lonely vale
With courteous voice thus spake:—

J. BRADER &c.

"I should have grieved
Hereafter—should perhaps have blamed myself—
If from my poor retirement ye had gone
Leaving this nook unvisited; but, in sooth,
Your unexpected presence had so roused
My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise;
And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
Or, shall I say—disdain'd—the game that lurk'd
At my own door. The shapes before our eyes,
And their arrangement, doubtless must be deem'd
The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance,
Rudely to mock the works of toiling man.
And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn stone,
From fancy, willing to set off her stores
By sounding titles, hath acquired the name
Of Pompey's Pillar; that I gravely style
My Theban obelisk; and, there, behold
A Druid cromlech!—thus I entertain
The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things,
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.
But if the spirit be oppress'd by sense
Of instability, revolt, decay,
And change, and emptiness, these freaks of Nature
And her blind helper Chance, do *then* suffice
To quicken, and to aggravate, to feed
Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
Not less than that huge pile (from some abyss
Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round
Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved;
Or Syria's marble ruins towering high
Above the sandy desert, in the light
Of sun or moon. Forgive me, if I say
That an appearance, which hath raised your minds
To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
Different effect producing) is for me
Fraught rather with depression than delight,
Though shame it were, could I not look around me,
By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
Yet happier, in my judgment, even than you,
With your bright transports, fairly may be deem'd,
Is he (if such have ever enter'd here)
The wandering herbalist,—who, clear alike
From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing thoughts,
Casts on these uncouth forms a slight regard

Of transitory interest, and peeps round
For some rare flow'ret of the hills, or plant
Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for, wins,
Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won:
Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound
By soul-engrossing instinct driven along
Through wood or open field, the harmless man
Departs, intent upon his onward quest!
Nor is that fellow-wanderer, so deem I,
Less to be envied (you may trace him oft
By scars which his activity has left
Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank Heaven!
This covert nook reports not of his hand,)
He, who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
Of every luckless rock or stone that stands
Before his sight, by weather-stains disguised,
Or crusted o'er with vegetation thin,
Nature's first growth—detaching by the stroke
A chip or splinter to resolve his doubts—
And, with that ready answer satisfied,
Doth to the substance give some barbarous name,
Then hurries on; or from the fragments picks
His specimen, if haply intervein'd
With sparkling mineral, or should crystal tube
Be lodged therein—and thinks himself enrich'd,
Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before!
Intrusted safely each to his pursuit,
This earnest pair may range from hill to hill,
And, if it please them, speed from clime to clime;
The mind is full—no pain is in their sport."

"Then," said I, interposing, "one is near,
Who cannot but possess in your esteem
Place worthier still of envy. May I name,
Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy—
Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form—
Youngest apprentice in the school of art?
Him, as we enter'd from the open glen,
You might have noticed, busily engaged—
Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
Left in the fabric of a leaky dam,
Framed for enabling this penurious stream
To turn a slender mill (that new-made plaything)
For his delight—the happiest he of all!"

"Far happiest," answer'd the desponding man,
"If, such as now he is, he might remain!
Ah! what avails imagination high
Or question deep? What profits all that earth,
Or heaven's blue vault, is suffer'd to put forth

Of impulse or allurement, for the soul
To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
Far as she finds a yielding element
In past or future; far as she can go
Through time or space—if neither in the one,
Nor in the other region, nor in aught
That fancy, dreaming o'er the map of things,
Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,
Words of assurance can be heard—if nowhere
A habitation, for consummate good,
Or for progressive virtue, by the search
Can be attain'd, a better sanctuary
From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless grave?"

"Is this," the gray-hair'd wanderer mildly said,
"The voice which we so lately overheard
To that same child addressing tenderly
The consolations of a hopeful mind?
'*His body is at rest—his soul in heaven.*'
These were your words; and, verily, methinks
Wisdom is ofttimes nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar."
The other, not displeased,
Promptly replied:—"My notion is the same;
And I, without reluctance, could decline
All act of inquisition whence we rise,
And what, when breath hath ceased, we may become.
Here are we, in a bright and breathing world!
Our origin, what matters it? In lack
Of worthier explanation, say at once
With the American (a thought which suits
The place where now we stand) that certain men
Leapt out together from a rocky cave;
And these were the first parents of mankind:
Or, if a different image be recall'd
By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
Of insects chirping out their careless lives
On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
As sound—with that blithe race who wore erewhile
Their golden grasshoppers, in sign that they
Had sprung from out the soil whereon they dwelt.
But stop!—these theoretic fancies jar
On serious minds; for doubtless, in one sense,
The theme *is* serious; then, as Hindoos draw
Their holy Ganges, from a skiey fount,
Even so deduce the stream of human life
From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
That our existence winds her stately course

Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
Of a living ocean: or, if such may seem
Its tendency, to be engulf'd and lost
Like Niger, in impenetrable sands
And utter darkness: thought which may be faced,
Though comfortless! Not of myself I speak;
Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
In me, a meekly-bending spirit, soothed
By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,
By philosophic discipline prepared
For calm subjection to acknowledged law;
Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
Such palms I boast not; no! to me, who find,
Reviewing my past way, much to condemn,
Little to praise, and nothing to regret,
(Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
That scarcely seem to have belong'd to me,)
If I must take my choice between the pair
That rule alternately the weary hours,
Night is than day more acceptable; sleep
Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
A better state than waking; death than sleep.
Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm,
Though under covert of the wormy ground!

"Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
That in more genial times, when I was free
To explore the destiny of human kind;
Not as an intellectual game pursued
With curious subtility, thereby to cheat
Irksome sensations; but by love of truth
Urged on, or haply by intense delight
In feeding thought, wherever thought could feed;
I did not rank with those (too dull or nice,
For to my judgment such they then appear'd,
Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
An object whereunto their souls are tied
In discontented wedlock; nor did e'er,
From me, those dark, impervious shades, that hang
Upon the region whither we are bound,
Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
Of present sunshine. Deities that float
On wings—angelic spirits! I could muse
O'er what from eldest time we have been told
Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
And with the imagination be content,
Not wishing more; repining not to tread
The little sinuous path of earthly care,

By flowers embellish'd, and by springs refresh'd.
'Blow, winds of autumn !—let your chilling breath
Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
The shady forest of its green attire,—
And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
The gentle brooks ! Your desolating sway,'
Thus I exclaim'd, 'no sadness sheds on me;
And no disorder in your rage I find.
What dignity, what beauty, in this change
From mild to angry, and from sad to gay,
Alternate and revolving ! How benign,
How rich in animation and delight,
How bountiful these elements—compared
With aught, as more desirable and fair,
Devised by fancy for the golden age :
Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
In Arcady, beneath unalter'd skies,
Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
Night hush'd as night, and day serene as day !'
But why this tedious record? Age we know
Is garrulous; and solitude is apt
To anticipate the privilege of age.
From far ye come; and surely with a hope
Of better entertainment—let us hence !"

Loath to forsake the spot, and still more loath
To be diverted from our present theme,
I said, "My thoughts, agreeing, sir, with yours,
Would push this censure farther; for, if smiles
Of scornful pity be the just reward
Of poesy, thus courteously employ'd
In framing models to improve the scheme
Of man's existence, and recast the world,
Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull?
"Yes," said I, "shall the immunities to which
She doth lay claim, the precepts she bestows,
Establish sounder titles of esteem
For her, who (all too timid and reserved
For onset, for resistance too inert,
Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame)
Did place in flow'ry gardens curtain'd round
With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood
Of soft Epicureans, taught—if they
The ends of being would secure, and win
The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls
To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,"

I cried, "more worthy of regard—the power,
Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed
The Stoic's heart against the vain approach
Of admiration, and all sense of joy?"

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
Accorded little with his present mind;
I ceased, and he resumed. "Ah! gentle sir,
Slight, if you will, the *means;* but spare to slight
The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
As the prime object of a wise man's aim,
Security from shock of accident,
Release from fear; and cherish'd peaceful days
For their own sakes, as mortal life's chief good,
And only reasonable felicity.
What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
Through a long course of later ages, drove
The hermit to his cell in forest wide;
Or what detain'd him, till his closing eyes
Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
Fast anchor'd in the desert? Not alone
Dread of the persecuting sword,—remorse,
Wrongs unredress'd, or insults unavenged
And unavengeable, defeated pride,
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betray'd, affection unreturn'd,
Love with despair, or grief in agony:
Not always from intolerable pangs
He fled; but, compass'd round by pleasure, sigh'd
For independent happiness; craving peace,
The central feeling of all happiness,
Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
But for its absolute self; a life of peace,
Stability without regret or fear;
That hath been, is, and shall be evermore!
Such the reward he sought; and wore out life,
There, where on few external things his heart
Was set, and those his own; or, if not his,
Subsisting under Nature's steadfast law.

"What other yearning was the master tie
Of the monastic brotherhood; upon rock
Aërial, or in green secluded vale,
One after one, collected from afar,
An undissolving fellowship? What but this,
The universal instinct of repose—
The longing for confirm'd tranquillity,
Inward and outward—humble, yet sublime:
The life where hope and memory are as one;

Earth quiet and unchanged; the human soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven reveal'd
To meditation in that quietness!—
Such was their scheme: thrice happy he who gain'd
The end proposed! And—though the same were miss'd
By multitudes, perhaps obtain'd by none—
They, for the attempt, and for the pains employ'd,
Do, in my present censure, stand redeem'd
From the unqualified disdain, that once
Would have been cast upon them by my voice
Delivering its decisions from the seat
Of forward youth, that scruples not to solve
Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
To overweening faith, and is inflamed
By courage, to demand from real life
The test of act and suffering to provoke
Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt!

"A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,
Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
That mine was a condition which required
Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
Without vicissitude; which, if the like
Had been presented to my view elsewhere
I might have even been tempted to despise.
But that which was serene was also bright;
Enliven'd happiness with joy o'erflowing,
With joy, and—oh! that memory should survive
To speak the word—with rapture! Nature's boon,
Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign;
Abused, as all possessions are abused
That are not prized according to their worth.
And yet, what worth?—what good is given to men,
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven,
What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?
None! 'tis the general plaint of human kind
In solitude; and mutually address'd
From each to all, for wisdom's sake: this truth
The priest announces from his holy seat;
And crown'd with garlands in the summer grove,
The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.
Yet, ere that final resting-place be gain'd,
Sharp contradictions hourly shall arise
To cross the way; and we, perchance, by doom
Of this same life, shall be compell'd to grieve

That the prosperities of love and joy
Should be permitted, ofttimes, to endure
So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
Oh! tremble ye to whom hath been assign'd
A course of days composing happy months,
And they as happy years; the present still
So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
Of a congenial future, that the wheels
Of pleasure move without the aid of hope,
For mutability is Nature's bane;
And slighted Hope will be avenged; and, when
Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not;
But, in her stead, fear—doubt—and agony!"

This was the bitter language of the heart;
But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,
Though discomposed and vehement, were such
As skill and graceful Nature might suggest
To a proficient of the tragic scene,
Standing before the multitude, beset
With sorrowful events; and we, who heard
And saw, were moved. Desirous to divert,
Or stem, the current of the speaker's thoughts,
We signified a wish to leave that place
Of stillness and close privacy, which seem'd
A nook for self-examination framed
Or for confession, in the sinner's need,
Hidden from all men's view To our attempt
He yielded not; but, pointing to a slope
Of mossy turf, defended from the sun;
And, on that couch inviting us to rest,
Towards that tender-hearted man he turn'd
A serious eye, and thus his speech renew'd:—
"You never saw, your eyes did never look
On the bright form of her whom once I loved;
Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
A sound unknown to you; else, honour'd friend!
Your heart had borne a pitiable share
Of what I suffer'd when I wept that loss,
And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought
That I remember, and can weep no more.
Stripp'd as I am of all the golden fruit
Of self-esteem; and by the cutting blasts
Of self-reproach familiarly assail'd;
I would not yet be of such wintry bareness,
But that some leaf of your regard should hang
Upon my naked branches: lively thoughts
Give birth, full often, to unguarded words;
I grieve that, in your presence, from my tongue

Too much of frailty hath already dropp'd;
But that too much demands still more.
"You know,
Reverend compatriot; and to you, kind sir,
(Not to be deem'd a stranger, as you come
Following the guidance of these welcome feet
To our secluded vale,) it may be told,
That my demerits did not sue in vain
To one, on whose mild radiance many gazed
With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair bride—
In the devotedness of youthful love,
Preferring me to parents, and the choir
Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
And all known places and familiar sights
(Resign'd with sadness gently weighing down
Her trembling expectations, but no more
Than did to her due honour, and to me
Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
In what I had to build upon)—this bride,
Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
To a low cottage in a sunny bay,
Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,
And the sea-breeze as innocently breathes,
On Devon's leafy shores; a shelter'd hold,
In a soft clime encouraging the soil
To a luxuriant bounty! As our steps
Approach th' embower'd abode—our chosen seat—
See, rooted in the earth, its kindly bed,
Th' unendanger'd myrtle, deck'd with flowers,
Before the threshold stands to welcome us!
While, in the flowering myrtle's neighbourhood,
Not overlook'd, but courting no regard,
Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
Gave modest intimation to the mind
Of willingness with which they would unite
With the green myrtle, t' endear the hours
Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
Wild were the walks upon those lonely downs,
Track leading into track, how mark'd, how worn
Into bright verdure, among fern and gorse,
Winding away its never-ending line
On their smooth surface, evidence was none:
But there lay open to our daily haunt,
A range of unappropriated earth,
Where youth's ambitious feet might move at large;
Whence, unmolested wanderers, we beheld
The shining giver of the day diffuse
His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
Gay as our spirits, free as our desires,

As our enjoyments boundless. From these heights
We dropp'd, at pleasure, into sylvan combs;
Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
And mossy seats, detain'd us side by side,
With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts,
'That all the grove and all the day was ours.'

"But in due season Nature interfered,
And call'd my partner to resign her share
In the pure freedom of that wedded life,
Enjoy'd by us in common. To my hope,
To my heart's wish, my tender mate became
The thankful captive of maternal bonds,
And those wild paths were left to me alone;
There could I meditate on follies past,
And, like a weary voyager escaped
From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace
A course of vain delights and thoughtless guilt,
And self-indulgence—without shame pursued;
There, undisturb'd, could think of, and could thank
Her—whose submissive spirit was to me
Rule and restraint—my guardian; shall I say
That earthly Providence whose guiding love
Within a port of rest had lodged me safe;
Safe from temptation, and from danger far?
Strains follow'd of acknowledgment address'd
To an Authority enthroned above
The reach of sight; from whom, as from their source,
Proceed all visible ministers of good
That walk the earth—Father of heaven and earth,
Father, and King, and Judge, adored and fear'd!
These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
And spirit—interrupted and relieved
By observations, transient as the glance
Of flying sunbeams, or to th' outward form
Cleaving, with power inherent and intense
As the mute insect fix'd upon the plant
On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose cup
Draws imperceptibly its nourishment,
Endear'd by wanderings; and the mother's kiss,
And infant's smile, awaited my return.

"In privacy we dwelt—a wedded pair,
Companions daily, often all day long;
Not placed by fortune within easy reach
Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
Beyond the allowance of our own fireside,
The twain within our happy cottage born
Inmates, and heirs of our united love;
Graced mutually by difference of sex,

By the endearing names of nature bound,
And with no wider interval of time
Between their several births than served for one
To establish something of a leader's sway;
Yet left them join'd by sympathy in age;
Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
On these two pillars rested as in air
Our solitude.

"It soothes me to perceive,
Your courtesy withholds not from my words
Attentive audience. But, oh! gentle friends,
As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though, for a nation times of blessedness,
Give back faint echo's from th' historian's page;
So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,
Depress'd I hear, how faithless is the voice
Which those most blissful days reverberate.
What special record can, or need be given
To rules and habits, whereby much was done
But all within the sphere of little things,
Of humble, though to us, important cares,
And precious interests? Smoothly did our life
Advance, not swerving from the path prescribed;
Her annual, her diurnal round alike
Maintain'd with faithful care. And you divine
The worst effects which our condition saw,
If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
And in their progress imperceptible,
Not wish'd for, sometimes noticed with a sigh,
(Whate'er of good or lovely they might bring,)
Sigh of regret, for the familiar good
And loveliness endear'd—which they removed.

"Seven years of occupation undisturb'd
Establish'd seemingly a right to hold
That happiness: and use and habit gave
To what an alien spirit had acquired
A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
With thoughts and wishes bounded to this world,
I lived and breathed; most grateful,—if t' enjoy
Without repining or desire for more,
For different lot, or change to higher sphere
(Only except some impulses of pride
With no determined object, though upheld
By theories with suitable support)—
Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
Be proof of gratitude for what we have:
Else, I allow, most thankless. But at once
From some dark seat of fatal power was urged

A claim that shatter'd all. Our blooming girl,
Caught in the gripe of death, with such brief time
To struggle in as scarcely would allow
Her cheek to change its colour, was convey'd
From us to regions inaccessible,
Where height, or depth, admits not the approach
Of living man, though longing to pursue.
With even as brief a warning—and how soon
With what short interval of time between
I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,
Our happy life's only remaining stay—
The brother, follow'd—and was seen no more!

"Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky,
The mother now remain'd; as if in her,
Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and disturb'd,
This second visitation had no power
To shake—but only to bind up and seal;
And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven's determinations, ever just.
The eminence on which her spirit stood,
Mine was unable to attain. Immense
The space that sever'd us! But, as the sight
Communicates with heaven's ethereal orbs
Incalculably distant; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far,
(And that is intercourse and union too,)
While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
And, with a holier love, inspired, I look'd
On her—at once superior to my woes
And partner of my loss. O heavy change!
Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept
Insensibly; th' immortal and divine
Yielded to mortal reflux; her pure glory,
As from the pinnacle of worldly state
Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell
Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
And keen heart-anguish,—of itself ashamed,
Yet obstinately cherishing itself:
And, so consumed, she melted from my arms;
And left me, on this earth, disconsolate!

"What follow'd cannot be review'd in thought,
Much less retraced in words. If she, of life
Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
And all the tender motions of the soul,
Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand,
Infirm, dependent, and now destitute?

I call'd on dreams and visions to disclose
That which is veil'd from waking thought; conjured
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer; to the grave I spake
Imploringly; look'd up, and ask'd the heavens
If angels traversed their cerulean floors,
If fix'd or wandering star could tidings yield
Of the departed spirit—what abode
It occupies—what consciousness retains
Of former loves and interests. Then my soul
Turn'd inward, to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed; and life was put
To inquisition long and profitless!
By pain of heart now check'd—and now impell'd—
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way!
And from those transports, and these toils abstruse,
Some trace am I enabled to retain
Of time, else lost; existing unto me
Only by records in myself not found.

"From that abstraction I was roused,—and how?
Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash
Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
Of these wild hills. For lo! the dread Bastille,
With all the chambers in its horrid towers,
Fell to the ground, by violence o'erthrown
Of indignation, and with shouts that drown'd
The crash it made in falling! From the wreck
A golden palace rose, or seem'd to rise,
The appointed seat of equitable law
And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
I felt; the transformation I perceived,
As marvellously seized as in that moment
When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
Glory, beyond all glory ever seen—
Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
Dazzling the soul! Meanwhile prophetic harps
In every grove were ringing, 'War shall cease;
Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured?
Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to deck
The tree of liberty.' My heart rebounded!
My melancholy voice the chorus join'd:
'Be joyful all ye nations in all lands,
Ye that are capable of joy be glad!
Henceforth, whate'er is wanting to yourselves
In others ye shall promptly find; and all
Be rich by mutual and reflected wealth.'

"Thus was I reconverted to the world;

Society became my glittering bride,
And airy hopes my children. From the depths
Of natural passion seemingly escaped,
My soul diffused itself in wide embrace
Of institutions, and the forms of things;
As they exist in mutable array
Upon life's surface. What though in my veins
There flow'd no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
Of my exhausted heart. If busy men
In sober conclave met, to weave a web
Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
There did I sit assisting. If, with noise
And acclamation, crowds in open air
Express'd the tumult of their minds, my voice
There mingled, heard or not. The powers of song
I left not uninvoked; and, in still groves
Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive lay
Of thanks and expectation, in accord
With their belief I sang Saturnian rule
Return'd, a progeny of golden years
Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem:
I felt the invitation; and resumed
A long-suspended office in the house
Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
Of ancient inspiration serving me,
I promised also,—with undaunted trust
Foretold; and added prayer to prophecy;
The admiration winning of the crowd,
The help desiring of the pure devout.

"Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed?
But History, Time's slavish scribe, will tell
How rapidly the zealots of the cause
Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appear'd;
Some, tired of honest service! these, outdone,
Disgusted, therefore, or appall'd, by aims
Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reign'd,
And the more faithful were compell'd to exclaim,
As Brutus did to virtue, 'Liberty,
I worshipp'd thee, and find thee but a shade!'

"Such recantation had for me no charm,
Nor would I bend to it; who should have grieved
At aught, however fair, which bore the mien
Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
Why then conceal, that, when the simple good

In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
Other support, not scrupulous whence it came,
And by what compromise it stood, not nice;
Enough if notions seem'd to be high-pitch'd,
And qualities determin'd. Ruling such,
And with such herding, I maintain'd a strife
Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour;
But, in the process, I began to feel
That, if the emancipation of the world
Were miss'd, I should at least secure my own,
And be in part compensated. For rights,
Widely—inveterately usurp'd upon,
I spake with vehemence; and promptly seized
Whate'er abstraction furnish'd for my needs
Or purposes; nor scrupled to proclaim,
And propagate, by liberty of life,
Those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced,
Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course,
For its own sake; but farthest from the walk
Which I had trod in happiness and peace,
Was most inviting to a troubled mind
That in a struggling and distemper'd world
Beheld a cherish'd image of itself.
Yet mark the contradictions of which man
Is still the sport! Here Nature was my guide,
The Nature of the dissolute; but thee,
O fostering Nature! I rejected—smiled
At others' tears in pity; and in scorn
At those, which thy soft influence sometimes drew
From my unguarded heart. The tranquil shores
Of Britain circumscribed me; else, perhaps,
I might have been entangled among deeds
Which now, as infamous, I should abhor—
Despise, as senseless; for strangely relish'd
The exasperated spirit of that land,
Which turn'd an angry beak against the down
Of its own breast; as if it hoped thereby
To disencumber its impatient wings.
But all was quieted by iron bonds
Of military sway. The shifting aims,
The moral interests, the creative might,
The varied functions and high attributes
Of civil action, yielded to a power
Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change;
The weak were praised, rewarded, and advanced;
And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
Once more did I retire into myself.
There feeling no contentment, I resolved

To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore
Remote from Europe, from her blasted hopes,
Her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

"Fresh blew the wind, when o'er the Atlantic main
The ship went gliding with her thoughtless crew:
And who among them, but an exile, freed
From discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit
Among the busily-employ'd, not more
With obligation charged, with service tax'd,
Than the loose pendant to the idle wind
Upon the tall mast streaming! But, ye powers
Of soul and sense—mysteriously allied,
Oh, never let the wretched, if a choice
Be left him, trust the freight of his distress
To a long voyage on the silent deep!
For, like a plague, will memory break out,
And, in the blank and solitude of things,
Upon his spirit, with a fever's strength,
Will conscience prey. Feebly must they have felt
Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
The vengeful furies. *Beautiful* regards
Were turn'd on me—the face of her I loved—
The wife and mother—pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches insupportable.
Where now that boasted liberty? No welcome
From unknown objects I received; and those,
Known and familiar, which the vaulted sky
Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
Disclose, had accusations to prefer
Against my peace. Within the cabin stood
That volume as a compass for the soul
Revered among the nations. I implored
Its guidance; but the infallible support
Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused
To one by storms annoy'd and adverse winds,
Perplex'd with currents, of his weakness sick,
Of vain endeavours tired, and by his own,
And by his nature's ignorance dismay'd.

"Long-wish'd-for sight, the Western world appear'd;
And, when the ship was moor'd, I leap'd ashore
Indignantly—resolved to be a man,
Who, having o'er the past no power, would live
No longer in subjection to the past,
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured:
So like a fugitive whose feet have clear'd
Some bound'ry which his followers may not cross
In prosecution of their deadly chase,

Respiring I look'd round. How bright the sun,
How promising the breeze! Can aught produced
In the old world compare, thought I, for power
And majesty, with this gigantic stream
Sprung from the desert? And behold, a city
Fresh, youthful, and aspiring! What are these
To me, or I to them? As much at least
As he desires that they should be, whom winds
And waves have wafted to this distant shore,
In the condition of a damaged seed
Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take root.
Here may I roam at large; my business is,
Roaming at large, t' observe, and not to feel;
And therefore not to act—convinced that all
Which bears the name of action, howsoe'er
Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful,
And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
On nearer view, a motley spectacle
Appear'd, of high pretensions—unreproved
But by the obstreperous voice of higher still;
Big passions strutting on a petty stage;
Which a detach'd spectator may regard
Not unamused. But ridicule demands
Quick change of objects; and, to laugh alone,
In woods and wilds, or any lonely place,
At a composing distance from the haunts
Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
As choice as musing leisure can bestow;
Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
May suit an airy demon; but, of all
Unsocial courses, 'tis the one least fit
For the gross spirit of mankind—the one
That soonest fails to please, and quickliest turns
Into vexation. Let us, then, I said,
Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
Of its own passions; and to regions haste,
Whose shades have never felt th' encroaching axe,
Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
Of dire rapacity. There, man abides,
Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
In combination, (wherefore else driven back
So far, and of his old inheritance
So easily deprived?) but, for that cause,
More dignified, and stronger in himself,
Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
True, the intelligence of social art
Hath overpower'd his forefathers, and soon
Will sweep the remnant of his line away:

But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
Than her destructive energies, attend
His independence, when along the side
Of Mississippi, or that northern stream
Which spreads into successive seas, he walks;
Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
And his innate capacities of soul,
There imaged: or, when having gain'd the top
Of some commanding eminence, which yet
Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
Regions of wood and wide savanna, vast
Expanse of unappropriated earth,
With mind that sheds a light on what he sees;
Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun
Pouring, above his head, its radiance down
Upon a living and rejoicing world!

"So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated woods,
I bent my way; and, roaming far and wide,
Fail'd not to greet the merry mocking-bird;
And while the melancholy muccawiss
(The sportive bird's companion in the grove)
Repeated o'er and o'er his plaintive cry,
I sympathised at leisure with the sound;
But that pure archetype of human greatness,
I found him not. There, in his stead, appear'd
A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure;
Remorseless, and submissive to no law
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.
Enough is told! Here am I—ye have heard
What evidence I seek, and vainly seek;
What from my fellow-beings I require,
And cannot find; what I myself have lost,
Nor can regain: how languidly I look
Upon this visible fabric of the world,
May be divined—perhaps it hath been said.
But spare your pity, if there be in me
Aught that deserves respect: for I exist—
Within myself—not comfortless. The tenor
Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
In some still passage of its course, and seen
Within the depths of its capacious breast
Inverted trees, and rocks, and azure sky;
And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam
And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars; that, by their onward lapse,
Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible; meanwhile is heard

Perchance a roar or murmur; and the sound
Though soothing, and the little floating isles
Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged
With the same pensive office; and make known
Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt
Precipitations, and untoward straits,
The earth-born wanderer hath pass'd; and quickly,
That respite o'er, like traverses and toils
Must be again encounter'd. Such a stream
Is human life; and so the spirit fares
In the best quiet to its course allow'd:
And such is mine—save only for a hope
That my particular current soon will reach
Th' unfathomable gulf where all is still!"

BOOK IV.

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED.

State of feeling produced by the foregoing narrative—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction—Wanderer's ejaculation to the Supreme Being—Account of his own devotional feelings in youth involved in it—Implores that he may retain in age the power to find repose among enduring and eternal things—What these latter are—Acknowleges the difficulty of a lively faith—Hence immoderate sorrow—But doubt or despondency not therefore to be inferred—And proceeds to administer consolation to the Solitary—Exhortations—How these are received—Wanderer resumes—And applies his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind, the disappointment of his expectations from the French Revolution—States the rational grounds of hope—And insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of the great revolutions of the world—Knowledge the source of tranquillity—Rural life and solitude particularly favourable to a knowledge of the inferior creatures—Study of their habits and ways recommended on the affections and the imagination—Exhortation to bodily exertion and an active communion with Nature—Morbid solitude a pitiable thing—If the elevated imagination cannot be exerted, try the humbler fancy—Superstition better than apathy—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society—The various modes of religion prevented it—This illustrated in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief—Solitary interposes—Wanderer, in answer, points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling on the mind in the humble ranks of society, in rural life especially—This illustrated from present and past times—Observation that these principles tend to recall exploded superstitions and popery—Wanderer rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the imagination with the presumptive littleness of certain modern philosophers, whom the Solitary appears to esteem—Recommends to him other lights and guides—Asserts the power of the soul to regenerate herself—Solitary agitated, and asks how—Reply—Personal appeal—Happy for us that the imagination and affections, in our own despite, mitigate the evils of that state of intellectual slavery which the calculating understanding is so apt to produce—Exhortation to activity of body renewed—How Nature is to be communed with—Wanderer concludes with a prospect of a legitimate union of the imagination, the affections, the understanding, and the reason—Effect of the Wanderer's discourse—Evening—Return to the Cottage.

HERE closed the tenant of that lonely vale
His mournful narrative, commenced in pain,

In pain commenced, and ended without peace;
Yet temper'd, not unfrequently, with strains
Of native feeling grateful to our minds,
And doubtless yielding some relief to his,
While we sate listening with compassion due.
Such pity yet surviving, with firm voice,
That did not falter, though the heart was moved,
The Wanderer said:—

"One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only—an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturb'd, is order'd by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme
For time and for eternity—by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of His perfections; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone
To the dishonour of His holy name.
Soul of our souls, and Safeguard of the world,
Sustain, Thou only canst, the sick of heart!
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto Thee and thine!"

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven:—"How beautiful this dome of sky,
And the vast hills, in fluctuation fix'd
At Thy command, how awful! Shall the soul,
Human and rational, report of Thee,
Even less than these? Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise Thee with impassion'd voice:
My lips, that may forget Thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget Thee here, where Thou hast built
For Thy own glory in the wilderness!
Me didst Thou constitute a priest of thine,
In such a temple as we now behold
Rear'd for thy presence: therefore am I bound
To worship, here and everywhere, as one
Not doom'd to ignorance, though forced to tread,
From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
From unreflecting ignorance preserved,

And from debasement rescued. By thy grace
The particle divine remain'd unquench'd;
And, 'mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
From paradise transplanted. Wintry age
Impends; the frost will gather round my heart,
And if they wither, I am worse than dead!
Come, labour, when the worn-out frame requires
Perpetual sabbath—come, disease and want,
And sad exclusion through decay of sense—
But leave me unabated trust in Thee—
And let Thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek
Repose and hope among eternal things,
Father of heaven and earth!—and I am rich,
And will possess my portion in content!

"And what are things eternal?—Powers depart,"
The gray-hair'd Wand'rer steadfastly replied,
Answering the question which himself had asked,
"Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat;
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists; immutably survive,
For our support, the measures and the forms
Which an abstract intelligence supplies;
Whose kingdom is where time and space are not.
Of other converse, which mind, soul, and heart
Do, with united urgency, require,
What more, that may not perish? Thou, dread Source,
Prime, self-existing Cause and End of all
That, in the scale of being fill their place,
Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustain'd—Thou, who didst wrap the cloud
Of infancy around us, that Thyself,
Therein, with our simplicity a while,
Mightst hold, on earth, communion undisturb'd—
Who, from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
And touch as gentle as the morning light,
Restor'st us daily to the powers of sense,
And reason's steadfast rule—Thou, Thou alone
Art everlasting, and the blessèd spirits,
Which Thou includest, as the sea her waves.
For adoration Thou endurest; endure
For consciousness the motions of Thy will;
For apprehension those transcendent truths
Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws

(Submission constituting strength and power)
Even to Thy Being's infinite majesty!
This universe shall pass away—a frame
Glorious, because the shadow of Thy might!
A step, or link, for intercourse with Thee.
Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet
No more shall stray where meditation leads
By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
Loved haunts like these—the unimprison'd mind
May yet have scope to range among her own,
Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
Still it may be allow'd me to remember
What visionary powers of eye and soul
In youth were mine; when, station'd on the top
Of some huge hill, expectant, I beheld
The sun rise up, from distant climes return'd
Darkness to chase, and sleep, and bring the day,
His bounteous gift!—or saw him towards the deep
Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
Attended; then my spirit was entranced
With joy exalted to beatitude;
The measure of my soul was fill'd with bliss
And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

"Those fervent raptures are for ever flown,
And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
Change manifold, for better or for worse;
Yet cease I not to struggle and t' aspire
Heavenward, and chide the part of me that flags
Through sinful choice, or dread necessity
On human nature, from above, imposed.
'Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise; but, to converse with Heaven—
This is not easy. To relinquish all
We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
And stand in freedom loosen'd from this world,
I deem not arduous; but must needs confess,
That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
Conceptions equal to the soul's desires,
And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
That with majestic energy from earth
Rises, but, having reach'd the thinner air,
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.

From this infirmity of mortal kind
Sorrow proceeds, which else were not; at least,
If grief be something hallow'd and ordain'd,
If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
Through this, 'tis able to maintain its hold
In that excess which conscience disapproves.
For who could sink and settle to that point
Of selfishness; so senseless who could be
In framing estimates of loss and gain,
As long and perseveringly to mourn
For any object of his love, removed
From this unstable world, if he could fix
A satisfying view upon that state
Of pure, imperishable blessedness,
Which reason promises, and Holy Writ
Insures to all believers? Yet mistrust
Is of such incapacity, methinks,
No natural branch; despondency far less.
And, if there be whose tender frames have
droop'd
Even to the dust, apparently through weight
Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power,
An agonising sorrow to transmute,
Infer not hence a hope from those withheld
When wanted most; a confidence impair'd
So pitiably, that, having ceased to see
With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
Oh, no! full oft the innocent sufferer sees
Too clearly, feels too vividly, and longs
To realise the vision with intense
And over-constant yearning: there, there lies
The excess, by which the balance is destroy'd.
Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
Though inconceivably endow'd, too dim
For any passion of the soul that leads
To ecstasy, and, all the crooked paths
Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
Along the line of limitless desires.
I, speaking now from such disorder free—
Nor sleep, nor craving, but in settled peace—
I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
Are glorified; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In mercy, carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts;
Hope, below this, consists not with belief

In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,
That finds no limits but its own pure will.

"Here, then, we rest, not fearing to be left
In undisturb'd possession of our creed,
For aught that human reasoning can achieve
To unsettle or perplex us; yet with pain
Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach,
That, though immovably convinced, we want
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith,
As soldiers live by courage; as, by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
Alas! the endowment of immortal power
Is match'd unequally with custom, time,
And domineering faculties of sense,
In *all*; in most, with superadded foes,
Idle temptations, open vanities
Of dissipation; countless, still renew'd,
Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing world:
And, in the private regions of the mind,
Ill-govern'd passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains? To seek
Those helps, for his occasions ever near,
Who lacks not will to use them; vows, renew'd
On the first motion of a holy thought;
Vigils of contemplation; praise, and prayer,—
A stream which, from the fountain of the heart,
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience,—conscience reverenced and obey'd,
As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And His most perfect image in the world.
Endeavour thus to live; these rules regard;
These helps solicit; and a steadfast seat
Shall then be yours among the happy few
Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
Sons of the morning. For your nobler part,
Ere disencumber'd of her mortal chains,
Doubt shall be quell'd and trouble chased away,
With only such degree of sadness left
As may support longings of pure desire,
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
In the sublime attractions of the grave."

While, in this strain, the venerable sage
Pour'd forth his aspirations, and announced

His judgments, near that lonely house we paced
A plot of greensward, seemingly preserved
By Nature's care from wreck of scatter'd stones,
And from the encroachment of encircling heath.
Small space; but, for reiterated steps,
Smooth and commodious; as a stately deck
Which to and fro the mariner is used
To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,
Or haply thinking of far-distant friends,
While the ship glides before a steady breeze.
Stillness prevail'd around us; and the voice
That spake was capable to lift the soul
Towards regions yet more tranquil. But, methought
That he, whose fix'd despondency had given
Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
Was less upraised in spirit than abash'd;
Shrinking from admonition, like a man
Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
Yet, not to be diverted from his aim,
The sage continued:—"For that other loss,
The loss of confidence in social man,
By the unexpected transports of our age
Carried so high, that every thought which look'd
Beyond the temporal destiny of the kind,
To many seem'd superfluous, as no cause
For such exalted confidence could e'er
Exist; so, none is now for such despair:
The two extremes are equally remote
From truth and reason; do not, then, confound
One with the other, but reject them both,
And choose the middle point, whereon to build
Sound expectations. This doth he advise
Who shared at first the illusion; but was soon
Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks
Which Nature gently gave in woods and fields;
Nor unreproved by Providence, thus speaking
To the inattentive children of the world:—
'Vain-glorious generation! what new powers
On you have been conferr'd—what gifts, withheld
From your progenitors, have ye received,
Fit recompence of new desert—what claim
Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
For you should undergo a sudden change;
And the weak functions of one busy day,
Reclaiming and extirpating, perform
What all the slowly-moving years of time,
With their united force, have left undone?
By nature's gradual processes be taught,
By story be confounded. Ye aspire

Rashly, to fall once more; and that false fruit,
Which, to your overweening spirits, yields
Hope of a flight celestial, will produce
Misery and shame. But wisdom of her sons
Shall not the less, though late, be justified.

"Such timely warning," said the Wanderer, "gave
That visionary voice; and, at this day,
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations; when the impious rule,
By will or by establish'd ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good
To acts which they abhor; though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning that the law
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies, more strict
Affiance in each other, faith more firm
In their unhallow'd principles, the bad
Have fairly earn'd a victory o'er the weak,
The vacillating, inconsistent good.
Therefore, not unconsoled, I wait—in hope
To see the moment when the righteous cause
Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
As they who have opposed her; in which Virtue
Will to her efforts tolerate no bounds
That are not lofty as her rights; aspiring
By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.
That spirit only can redeem mankind;
And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
Then shall *our* triumph be complete as theirs.
Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the wise
Have still the keeping of their proper peace,
Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
They act or they recede, observe and feel,
'Knowing' (to adopt the energetic words
Which a time-hallow'd poet hath employ'd)
'Knowing the heart of man is set to be
The centre of this world, about the which
Those revolutions of disturbances
Still roll; where all th' aspects of misery
Predominate; whose strong effects are such
As he must bear, being powerless to redress,
And that unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!'*

"Happy is he who lives to understand
Not human nature only, but explores

* Daniel.

All natures, to the end that he may find
The law that governs each; and where begins
The union, the partition where, that makes
Kind and degree among all visible beings;
The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,—
And cannot fall beneath; that do assign
To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of things,
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign man.
Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love;
For knowledge is delight; and such delight
Breeds love; yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,
It teaches less to love, than to adore;
If that be not indeed the highest love!"

"Yet," said I, tempted here to interpose,
"The dignity of life is not impair'd
By aught that innocently satisfies
The humbler cravings of the heart; and he
Is a still happier man, who, for those heights
Of speculation not unfit, descends,
And such benign affections cultivates
Among the inferior kinds; not merely those
That he may call his own, and which depend,
As individual objects of regard,
Upon his care; from whom he also looks
For signs and tokens of a mutual bond;
But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
Nor is it a mean phase of rural life
And solitude, that they do favour most,
Most frequently call forth, and best sustain
These pure sensations; that can penetrate
The obstreperous city; on the barren seas
Are not unfelt,—and much might recommend,
How much they might inspirit and endear,
The loneliness of this sublime retreat!"

"Yes," said the sage, resuming the discourse,
Again directed to his downcast friend,
"If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
Of man offended, Liberty is here,
And invitation every hour renew'd,
To mark *their* placid state who never heard
Of a command which they have power to break,
Or rule which they are tempted to transgress:
These, with a soothed or elevated heart,

May we behold—their knowledge register—
Observe their ways; and, free from envy, find
Complacence there: but wherefore this to you?
I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
The redbreast feeds in winter from your hand;
A box perchance is from your casement hung
For the small wren to build in; not in vain,
The barriers disregarding that surround
This deep abiding-place, before your sight
Mounts on the breeze the butterfly, and soars,
Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers
Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
In the waste wilderness; the soul ascends
Towards her native firmament of heaven,
When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
Upborne, at evening, on replenish'd wing,
This shady valley leaves, and leaves the dark
Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
A proud communication with the sun
Low sunk beneath the horizon. List!—I heard,
From yon huge breast of rock, a solemn bleat,
Sent forth as if it were the mountain's voice,
As if the visible mountain made the cry,
Again!" The effect upon the soul was such
As he express'd: for, from the mountain's heart
The solemn bleat appear'd to come; there was
No other—and the region all around
Stood silent, empty of all shape of life.
It was a lamb, left somewhere to itself,
The plaintive spirit of the solitude!
He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
Through consciousness that silence in such place
Was best,—the most affecting eloquence.
But soon his thoughts return'd upon themselves,
And, in soft tone of speech, he thus resumed:—

"Ah! if the heart, too confidently raised,
Perchance too lightly occupied, or lull'd
Too easily, despise or overlook
The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
Her sad dependence upon time, and all
The trepidations of mortality,
What place so destitute and void but there
The little flower her vanity shall check;
The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless pride?

"These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
Does that benignity pervade, that warms
The mole contented with her darksome walk
In the cold ground; and to the emmet gives

Her foresight, and the intelligence that makes
The tiny creatures strong by social league;
Supports the generations, multiplies
Their tribes till we behold a spacious plain
Or grassy bottom, all with little hills—
Their labour—cover'd, as a lake with waves;
Thousands of cities, in the desert place
Built up of life, and food, and means of life!
Nor wanting here, to entertain the thought,
Creatures that in communities exist,
Less, as might seem, for general guardianship,
Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
Than by participation of delight
And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
What other spirit can it be that prompts
The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
Their sports together in the solar beam,
Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy?
More obviously the self-same influence rules
The feather'd kinds; the fieldfare's pensive flocks,
The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
Hovering above these inland solitudes,
Unscatter'd by the wind, at whose loud call
Their voyage was begun: nor is its power
Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
That seek yon pool, and there prolong their stay
In silent congress; or together roused
Take flight; while with their clang the air resounds,
And, over all, in that ethereal arch,
Is the mute company of changeful clouds;
Bright apparition suddenly put forth,
The rainbow, smiling on the faded storm;
The mild assemblage of the starry heavens;
And the great sun, earth's universal lord!

"How bountiful is Nature! he shall find
Who seeks not; and to him who hath not ask'd
Large measure shall be dealt. Three Sabbath-days
Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
Of mere humanity, you clomb those heights;
And what a marvellous and heavenly show
Was to your sight reveal'd!—the swains moved on,
And heeded not: you linger'd, and perceived.
There is a luxury in self-dispraise;
And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.
Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
You judge thankfully; distemper'd nerves
Infect the thoughts; the languor of the frame

Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your couch—
Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell;
Nor let the hallow'd powers that shed from heaven
Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
Look down upon your taper, through a watch
Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
In this deep hollow; like a sullen star
Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.
Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
That run not parallel to Nature's course.
Rise with the lark! your matins shall obtain
Grace, be their composition what it may,
If but with hers perform'd; climb once again,
Climb every day, those ramparts; meet the breeze
Upon their tops,—adventurous as a bee
That from your garden thither soars, to feed
On new-blown heath; let yon commanding rock
Be your frequented watch-tower; roll the stone
In thunder down the mountains: with all your might
Chase the wild goat; and, if the bold red deer
Fly to these harbours, driven by hound and horn
Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit;
So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
And sink at evening into sound repose."

The Solitary lifted towards the hills
An animated eye; and thoughts were mine
Which this ejaculation clothed in words:—
"Oh! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
To have a body, (this our vital frame
With shrinking sensibility endued,
And all the nice regards of flesh and blood,)
And to the elements surrender it
As if it were a spirit!—How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal man,
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
To oldest time! and, reckless of the storm
That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there; and, while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument; and, while the streams
(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untried faculties)
Descending from the region of the clouds

And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them, what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies;
And haply sometimes with articulate voice,
Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
By him that utters it, exclaim aloud,
'Be this continued so from day to day,
Nor let it have an end from month to month!'"

"Yes," said the Wanderer, taking from my lips
The strain of transport, "whosoe'er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasp'd at such delight,
Shall feel the stirrings of them late and long;
In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
Its cares and sorrows; he, though taught to own
The tranquillising power of time, shall wake—
Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
Loving the spots which once he gloried in.

"Compatriot—friend! remote are Garry's hills,
The streams far distant of your native glen;
Yet is their form and image here express'd
As by a duplicate—at least set forth
With brotherly resemblance. Turn your steps
Wherever fancy leads; by day, by night,
Are various engines working, not the same
As those by which your soul in youth was moved,
But by the great Artificer endued
With no inferior power. You dwell alone;
You walk, you live, you speculate alone;
Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
Have acted, suffer'd, travell'd far, observed
With no incurious eye; and books are yours,
Within whose silent chamber treasure lies
Preserved from age to age; more precious far
Than that accumulated store of gold
And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
The sultan hides within ancestral tombs;
These hoards of truth you can unlock at will:
And music waits upon your skilful touch,—
Sounds which the wandering shepherd from these heights
Hears, and forgets his purpose. Furnish'd thus,
How can you droop, if willing to be raised?

"A piteous lot it were to flee from man—
Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours

Are by domestic pleasures uncaress'd
And unenliven'd; who exists whole years
Apart from benefits received or done
'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd;
Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
Of the world's interests—such a one hath need
Of a quick fancy and an active heart,
That for the day's consumption books may yield
A not unwholesome food, and earth and air
Supply his morbid humour with delight.
Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her haunts of ease
And easy contemplation—gay parterres,
And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades
And shady groves, for recreation framed:
These may he range, if willing to partake
Their soft indulgences, and in due time
May issue thence, recruited for the tasks
And course of service Truth requires from those
Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and feels,
And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of Nature stirring in his soul,
Why need such man go desperately astray,
And nurse 'the dreadful appetite of death?'
If tired with systems, each in its degree
Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
Let him build systems of his own, and smile
At the fond work—demolish'd with a touch;
If unreligious, let him be at once
Among ten thousand innocents, enroll'd
A pupil in the many-chamber'd school,
Where superstition weaves her airy dreams.

"Life's autumn past, I stand on winter's verge,
And daily lose what I desire to keep
Yet rather would I instantly decline
To the traditionary sympathies
Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
A fearful apprehension from the owl
Or death-watch, and as readily rejoice,
If two auspicious magpies cross'd my way;
This rather would I do than see and hear
The repetitions wearisome of sense,
Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place;
Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
On outward things, with formal inference ends,
Or, if the mind turn inward, 'tis perplex'd,
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research;
Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat

Where peace and happy consciousness should dwell
On its own axis restlessly revolves,
Yet nowhere finds the cheering light of truth.

"Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walk'd; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, upon the wind, the articulate voice
Of God; and angels to his sight appear'd,
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise,
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sate, and talk'd
With wingèd messengers, who daily brought
To his small island in th' ethereal deep,
Tidings of joy and love. From these pure heights
(Whether of actual vision, sensible
To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
Have condescendingly been shadow'd forth
Communications spiritually maintain'd,
And intuitions moral and divine)
Fell human kind—to banishment condemn'd,
That flowing years repeal'd not, and distress,
And grief spread wide; but man escaped the doom
Of destitution—solitude was not.
Jehovah—shapeless Power above all powers,
Single and one, the omnipresent God,
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven—
On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark,
Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
Between the Cherubim—on the chosen race
Shower'd miracles, and ceased not to dispense
Judgments that fill'd the land from age to age
With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear,
And with amazement smote—thereby to assert
His scorn'd, or unacknowledged sovereignty.
And when the One, ineffable of name,
In nature indivisible, withdrew
From mortal adoration or regard,
Not then was Deity ingulf'd, nor man,
The rational creature, left to feel the weight
Of his own reason, without sense or thought
Of higher reason, and a purer will
To benefit and bless, through mightier power.
Whether the Persian, zealous to reject
Altar and image, and the inclusive walls
And roofs of temples built by human hands,
The loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
With myrtle-wreath'd tiara on his brows,

Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
And to the winds and mother elements,
And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
A sensitive existence, and a God
With lifted hands invoked and songs of praise.
Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
For influence undefined a personal shape;
And, from the plain, with toil immense, uprear'd
Tower eight times planted on the top of tower,
That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
Descending, there might rest; and, from that height,
Pure and serene, the godhead overlook
Winding Euphrates, and the city vast
Of his devoted worshippers, far stretch'd,
With grove, and field, and garden interspersed;
Their town, and foodful region for support
Against the pressure of beleagu'ring war.

"Chaldean shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Look'd on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His steadfast eye. The planetary five
With a submissive reverence they beheld;
Watch'd, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries, that seem'd to move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
Decrees and resolutions of the gods;
And, by their aspects, signifying works
Of dim futurity, to man reveal'd.
The imaginative faculty was lord
Of observations natural; and, thus
Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
In set rotation passing to and fro,
Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
And its invisible counterpart, adorn'd
With answering constellations, under earth,
Removed from all approach of living sight,
But present to the dead, who, so they deem'd,
Like those celestial messengers, beheld
All accidents, and judges were of all.

"The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers, and fertile plains, and sounding shores,
Under a cope of variegated sky,
Could find commodious place for every god,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
From the surrounding countries, at the choice

Of all adventurers. With unrivall'd skill,
As nicest observation furnish'd hints
For studious fancy, did his hand bestow
On fluent operations a fix'd shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet, triumphant o'er this pompous shew
Of art, this palpable array of sense,
On every side encounter'd; in despite
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
By wandering rhapsodists; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denials hourly urged
Amid the wrangling schools—a 'spirit' hung,
Beautiful region! o'er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived, and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course,
Exemplified by mysteries that were felt
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
And armèd warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevail'd,
When piety more awful had relax'd.
'Take, running river, take these locks of mine,'—
Thus would the votary say,—'this sever'd hair,
My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
Thankful for my belovèd child's return.
Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,
Thy murmurs heard, and drunk the crystal lymph
With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
And moisten all day long those flowery fields.'
And doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of life continuous—being unimpair'd—
That hath been, is, and where it was and is,
There shall be—seen, and heard, and felt, and known,
And recognised,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of mortal accident;
From diminution safe and weakening age;
While man grows old, and dwindles, and decays,
And countless generations of mankind
Depart, and leave no vestige where they trod.

"We live by admiration, hope, and love;
And, even as these are well and wisely fix'd,
In dignity of being we ascend.
But what is error?" "Answer he who can!"
The sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaim'd;
"Love, hope, and admiration—are they not
Mad fancy's favourite vassals? Does not life
Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin,

Guides to destruction? Is it well to trust
Imagination's light when Reason's fails,
Th' unguarded taper where the guarded faints?
Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
What error is; and, of our errors, which
Doth most debase the mind! the genuine seats
Of power, where are they? Who shall regulate,
With truth, the scale of intellectual rank?"

"Methinks," persuasively the sage replied,
"That for this arduous office you possess
Some rare advantages. Your early days
A grateful recollection must supply
Of much exalted good that may attend
Upon the very humblest state. Your voice
Hath in my hearing often testified
That poor men's children, they, and they alone,
By their condition taught, can understand
The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
How feelingly religion may be learn'd
In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—
Heard while the dwelling vibrates to the din
Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
At every moment,—and, with strength, increase
Of fury; or while snow is at the door,
Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
Fearful, but resignation tempers fear,
And piety is sweet to infant minds.
The shepherd lad, who in the sunshine carves
On the green turf a dial, to divide
The silent hours; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt
His round of pastoral duties, is not left
With less intelligence for *moral* things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
Within himself, a measure and a rule,
Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
That shines for him, and shines for all mankind.
Experience, daily fixing his regards
On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
And where they lie, how answer'd and appeased.
This knowledge ample recompence affords
For manifold privations; he refers
His notions to this standard; on this rock
Rests his desires; and hence, in after life,
Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
Imagination—not permitted here

To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind,
On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
And trivial ostentation—is left free
And puissant to range the solemn walks
Of time and nature, girded by a zone
That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
Of his poor hut, or on the mountain-top,
Or in the cultured field, a man like this
(Take from him what you will upon the score
Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
For noble purposes of mind: his heart
Beats to the heroic song of ancient days;
His eye distinguishes; his soul creates;
And those illusions which excite the scorn
Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
Are they not mainly outward ministers
Of inward conscience? With whose service charged
They come and go, appear and disappear;
Diverting evil purposes, remorse
Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
Or pride of heart abating: and whene'er
For less important ends those phantoms move,
Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
Among wild mountains and unpeopled heaths,
Filling a space else vacant, to exalt
The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers?

"Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
The face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlighten'd swains of pagan Greece.
In that fair clime the lonely herdsman, stretch'd
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
With music lull'd his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetch'd
Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A beardless youth, who touch'd a golden lute,
And fill'd the illumined groves with ravishment.
The nightly hunter, lifting up his eyes
Towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
Call'd on the lovely wanderer who bestow'd
That timely light, to share his joyous sport;
And hence, a beaming goddess, with her nymphs,
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove
(Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes

By echo multiplied from rock or cave)
Swept in the storm of chase, as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heavens,
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thank'd
The Naiad. Sunbeams upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transform'd
Into fleet Oreads, sporting visibly.
The zephyrs fanning as they pass'd, their wings,
Lack'd not, for love, fair objects, whom they woo'd
With gentle whisper. Wither'd boughs grotesque,
Stripp'd of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain-side—
And sometimes, intermix'd with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard—
These were the lurking satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome deities—or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring god!"

No apter strain could have been chosen: I mark'd
Its kindly influence on the yielding brow
Of our companion gradually diffused,
While, listening, he had paced the noiseless turf,
Like one whose untired ear a murmuring stream
Detains; but tempted now to interpose,
He with a smile exclaim'd,—

"'Tis well you speak
At a safe distance from our native land,
And from the mansions where our youth was taught.
The true descendants of those godly men
Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
That harbour'd them,—the souls retaining yet
The churlish features of that after race
Who fled to caves, and woods, and naked rocks,
In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
Or what their scruples construed to be such—
How, think you, would they tolerate this scheme
Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
Uprooted; would re-consecrate our wells
To good Saint Fillan, and to fair Saint Anne;
And from long banishment recall Saint Giles,
To watch again with tutelary love
O'er stately Edinburgh throned on crags?
A blessèd restoration—to behold

The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
Once more parading through her crowded streets,
Now simply guarded by the sober powers
Of science, and philosophy, and sense!"

This answer follow'd:—"You have turn'd my thoughts
Upon our brave progenitors, who rose
Against idolatry with warlike mind,
And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
In caves, and woods, and under dismal rocks,
Deprived of shelter, covering, fire, and food;
Why?—for this very reason—that they felt,
And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they moved,
A spiritual presence, ofttimes misconceived:
But still a high dependence, a divine
Bounty and government, that fill'd their hearts
With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love;
And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise
With which the deserts rang. Though favour'd less,
Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
Were those bewilder'd pagans of old time.
Beyond their own poor natures and above
They look'd; were humbly thankful for the good
Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
Bestow'd; were gladsome,—and their moral sense
They fortified with reverence for the gods;
And they had hopes that overstepp'd the grave.

"Now, shall our great discoverers," he exclaim'd,
Raising his voice triumphantly, "obtain
From sense and reason less than these obtain'd,
Though far misled? Shall men for whom our age
Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
To explore the world without and world within,
Be joyless as the blind? Ambitious souls—
Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
The planets in the hollow of their hand;
And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
Have solved the elements, or analysed
The thinking principle—shall they, in fact,
Prove a degraded race? And what avails
Renown, if their presumption make them such?
Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
Inquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
That we should pry far off, yet be unraised:
That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
Viewing all objects unremittingly
In disconnexion dead and spiritless;

And still dividing, and dividing still,
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
With the perverse attempt, while littleness
May yet become more little; waging thus
An impious warfare with the very life
Of our own souls! And if indeed there be
An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
Our dark foundations rest, could He design,
Or will His rites and services permit
That this magnificent effect of power,
The earth we tread, the sky which we behold
By day, and all the pomp which night reveals,
That these—and that superior mystery
Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
And the dread soul within it—should exist
Only to be examined, ponder'd, search'd,
Probed, vex'd, and criticised? Accuse me not
Of arrogance, unknown wanderer as I am—
If, having walk'd with Nature threescore years,
And offer'd, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their divinity
Revolts, offended, at the ways of men,
Sway'd by such motives, to such end employ'd;
Philosophers, who, when the human soul
Is of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud self-love her own intelligence;
That one poor finite object, in the abyss
Of infinite being, twinkling restlessly!

"Nor higher place can be assign'd to him
And his compeers—the laughing sage of France.
Crown'd was he, if my memory doth not err,
With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
In sign of conquest by his wit achieved,
And benefits his wisdom had conferr'd.
His tottering body was oppress'd with flowers;
Far less becoming ornaments than those
With which spring often decks a mouldering tree!
Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain old man,
And a most frivolous people. Him I mean
Who framed, to ridicule confiding faith,
This sorry legend; which by chance we found
Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,
Among more innocent rubbish." Speaking thus,

With a brief notice when, and how, and where,
We had espied the book, he drew it forth,
And courteously, as if the act removed
At once all traces from the good man's heart
Of unbenign aversion or contempt,
Restored it to its owner. "Gentle friend"—
Herewith he grasp'd the Solitary's hand,—
"You have known better lights and guides than these—
Ah! let not aught amiss within dispose
A noble mind to practise on herself,
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs
Of passion: whatsoe'er is felt or fear'd
From higher judgment-seats—make no appeal
To lower! Can you question that the soul
Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
By each new upstart notion? In the ports
Of levity no refuge can be found,
No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
He who by wilful disesteem of life
And proud insensibility to hope,
Affronts the eye of solitude, shall learn
That her mild nature can be terrible;
That neither she nor silence lacks the power
T'avenge their own insulted majesty.
O blest seclusion! when the mind admits
The law of duty; and thereby can live
Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
Link'd in entire complacence with her choice;
When youth's presumptuousness is mellow'd down,
And manhood's vain anxiety dismiss'd;
When wisdom shews her seasonable fruit,
Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
In sober plenty; when the spirit stoops
To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
Of unreproved enjoyment; and is pleased
To muse, and be saluted by the air
Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents
From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
O calm, contented days and peaceful nights!
Who, when such good can be obtain'd, would strive
To reconcile his manhood to a couch
Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
Stuff'd with the thorny substance of the past,
For fix'd annoyance; and full oft beset
With floating dreams, disconsolate and black,
The vapoury phantoms of futurity?

"Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal, that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer eve
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns like an unconsuming fire of light
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene—like power abides
In man's celestial spirit; Virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment,—nay, from guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting Justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair."

The Solitary by these words was touch'd
With manifest emotion, and exclaim'd,
"But how begin—and whence?—'The mind is free—
Resolve,' the haughty moralist would say,
'This single act is all that we demand.'
Alas! such wisdom bids a creature fly,
Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
His natural wings! To friendship let him turn
For succour; but perhaps he sits alone
On stormy waters, in a little boat
That holds but him, and can contain no more!
Religion tells of amity sublime
Which no condition can preclude; of One
Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs;
But is that bounty absolute? His gifts,
Are they not still, in some degree, rewards
For acts of service? Can His love extend
To hearts that own not Him? Will showers of grace,
When in the sky no promise may be seen,
Fall to refresh a parch'd and wither'd land?
Or shall the groaning spirit cast her load
At the Redeemer's feet?"

In rueful tone,
With some impatience in his mien he spake;
And this reply was given:—

"As men from men
Do in the constitution of their souls

Differ, by mystery not to be explain'd;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemn'd,
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame,
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashion'd to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point,—attainable by all;
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
For him to whom I speak an easy road
Lies open: we have heard from you a voice
At every moment soften'd in its course
By tenderness of heart; have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us. Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wish'd to flow
In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colours of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
Which the imaginative will upholds
In seats of wisdom, not to be approach'd
By the inferior faculty that moulds,
With her minute and speculative pains,
Opinion, ever changing. I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipp'd shell;
To which, in silence hush'd, his very soul
Listen'd intensely; and his countenance soon
Brighten'd with joy; for murmurings from within
Were heard,—sonorous cadences! whereby,
To his belief, the monitor express'd
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it not;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought,
Devout above the meaning of your will.
Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn,
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.

Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky
To rest upon their circumambient walls?
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers—Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights
And blind recesses of the cavern'd rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams; and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark-blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above the power of sight—
An iron knell! with echoes from afar,
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seem'd
To expire, yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recover'd!

"But descending
From these imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into eternity,
Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
Your cherish'd sullenness is forced to bend
Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
To range her blooming bowers and spacious fields,
Where on the labours of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower, and sea with ships
Sprinkled; be our companion while we track
Her rivers populous with gliding life;
While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
And pierce the gloom of her majestic woods,
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade,
In peace and meditative cheerfulness;

Where living things, and things inanimate,
Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
And speak to social reason's inner sense,
With inarticulate language.
"For the man,
Who, in this spirit, communes with the forms
Of Nature; who, with understanding heart,
Doth know and love such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred, needs must feel
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly, he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion soften'd down;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame.
His sanity of reason not impair'd,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks;
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name; and if he hear
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.

"And further; by contemplating these forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things,
Convoked by knowledge; and for his delight
Still ready to obey the gentle call.
Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
For them shall all things speak of man; they read
Their duties in all forms; and general laws,
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge, and with the will confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, they shall at length obtain
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe

The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name.
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
Chain'd to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use,
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
So build we up the being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking in the soul of things,
We shall be wise perforce; and while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the will is free,
Unswerving shall we move, as if impell'd
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
Or indirect, shall tend to feed and nurse
Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights
Of love divine, our intellectual soul."

Here closed the sage that eloquent harangue,
Pour'd forth with fervour in continuous stream;
Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness,
An Indian chief discharges from his breast
Into the hearing of assembled tribes,
In open circle seated round, and hush'd
As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
Stirs in the mighty woods. So did he speak.
The words he utter'd shall not pass away;
For they sank into me—the bounteous gift
Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
Gracing his language with authority
Which hostile spirits silently allow;
Of one accustom'd to desires that feed
On fruitage gather'd from the tree of life;
To hopes on knowledge and experience built,
Of one in whom persuasion and belief
Had ripen'd into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition; whence the soul,
Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
From all injurious servitude was free.

The sun, before his place of rest was reach'd,

Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
To us who stood low in that hollow dell,
He had become invisible,—a pomp
Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
Upon the mountain-sides, in contrast bold
With ample shadows, seemingly no less
Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest,
A dispensation of his evening power.
Adown the path which from the glen had led
The funeral train, the shepherd and his mate
Were seen descending; forth in transport ran
Our little page; the rustic pair approach;
And in the matron's aspect may be read
A plain assurance that the words which told
How that neglected pensioner was sent,
Before his time, into a quiet grave,
Had done to her humanity no wrong.
But we are kindly welcomed; promptly served
With ostentatious zeal. Along the floor
Of the small cottage in the lonely dell
A grateful couch was spread for our repose;
Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we slept,
Stretch'd upon fragrant heath, and lull'd by sound
Of far-off torrents charming the still night,
And to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.

BOOK V.

THE PASTOR.

Farewell to the Valley—Reflections—Sight of a large and populous Vale—Solitary consents to go forward—Vale described—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him—The Churchyard—Church and Monuments—The Solitary musing, and where—Roused—In the churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life—Inconsistency of the best men—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind—General complaint of a falling-off in the value of life after the time of youth—Outward appearance of content and happiness in degree illusive—Pastor approaches—Appeal made to him—His answer—Wanderer in sympathy with him—Suggestion that the least ambitious inquirers may be most free from error—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observations of life among these mountains—and for what purpose—Pastor consents—Mountain cottage—Excellent qualities of its inhabitants—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the churchyard—Graves of unbaptized Infants—What sensations they excite—Funereal and sepulchral observances—Whence—Ecclesiastical establishments—Whence derived—Profession of belief in the doctrine of immortality.

"FAREWELL, deep valley, with thy one rude house,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields
And guardian rocks! With unreverted eyes
I cannot pass thy bounds, attractive seat!
To the still influx of the morning light
Open, and day's pure cheerfulness, but veil'd
From human observation, as if yet
Primeval forests wrapp'd thee round with dark
Impenetrable shade; once more, farewell,
Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss!
By Nature destined from the birth of things
For quietness profound!"
Upon the side
Of that green slope, the outlet of the vale,
Lingering behind my comrades, thus I breath'd
A parting tribute to a spot that seem'd
Like the fix'd centre of a troubled world.
And now, pursuing leisurely my way,
"How vain," thought I, "it is, by change of place
To seek that comfort which the mind denies;
Yet trial and temptation oft are shunn'd
Wisely; and by such tenure do we hold
Frail life's possessions, that even they whose fate
Yields no peculiar reason of complaint
Might, by the promise that is here, be won
To steal from active duties, and embrace

Obscurity, and calm forgetfulness.
Knowledge, methinks, in these disorder'd times,
Should be allow'd a privilege to have
Her anchorites, like piety of old;
Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstain'd
By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
Uncensured, and subsist, a scatter'd few,
Living to God and nature, and content
With that communion. Consecrated be
The spots where such abide! But happier still
The man, whom, furthermore, a hope attends
That meditation and research may guide
His privacy to principles and powers
Discover'd, or invented, or set forth,
Through his acquaintance with the ways of truth,
In lucid order; so that, when his course
Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
He sought not praise—and praise did overlook
His unobtrusive merit; but his life,
Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
That shall survive his name and memory."

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
Accompanied these musings; fervent thanks
For my own peaceful lot and happy choice;
A choice that from the passions of the world
Withdrew, and fix'd me in a still retreat,
Shelter'd, but not to social duties lost,
Secluded, but not buried; and with song
Cheering my days, and with industrious thought,
With the ever-welcome company of books,
By virtuous frendship's soul-sustaining aid,
And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
Following the rugged road by sledge or wheel
Worn in the moorland, till I overtook
My two associates, in the morning sun
Halting together on a rocky knoll,
From which the road descended rapidly
To the green meadows of another vale.

Here did our pensive host put forth his hand
In sign of farewell. "Nay," the old man said,
"The fragrant air its coolness still retains;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop
The dewy grass; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour."
To that injunction, earnestly express'd,
He yielded, though reluctant; for his mind

Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert; as a billow, heaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
So we descend; and winding round a rock,
Attain a point that shew'd the valley, stretch'd
In length before us; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground, a gray church-tower,
Whose battlements were screen'd by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal mere, that lay beyond,
Among steep hills and woods embosom'd, flow'd
A copious stream with boldly-winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden, there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and everywhere, appear'd
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots,
Some scatter'd o'er the level, others perch'd
On the hill-sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity array'd.

"As 'mid some happy valley of the Alps,"
Said I, "once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroy'd their unoffending commonwealth,
A popular equality doth seem
Here to prevail; and yet a house of state
Stands yonder, one beneath whose roof, methinks,
A rural lord might dwell." "No feudal pomp,"
Replied our friend, a chronicler who stood
Where'er he moved upon familiar ground—
"Nor feudal power is there; but there abides,
In his allotted home, a genuine priest,
The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king
Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
The father of his people—such is he;
And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
Under his spiritual sway, collected round him
In this sequester'd realm. He hath vouchsafed
To me some portion of his kind regard;
And something also of his inner mind
Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
As he is known to all.
"The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning's solid dignity; though born
Of knightly race, not wanting powerful friends.
This good to reap, these pleasures to secure,
Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
From academic bowers. He loved the spot—
Who does not love his native soil?—he prized

The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsuppress'd
And undisguised, and strong and serious thought:
A character reflected in himself,
With such embellishment as well beseems
His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
Is lengthen'd out by many a winding reach,
Not visible to us; and one of these
A turreted manorial hall adorns,
In which the good man's ancestors have dwelt
From age to age, the patrons of this cure.
To them, and to his decorating hand,
The vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
Owes that presiding aspect which might well
Attract your notice; statelier than could else
Have been bestow'd, in course of common chance,
On an unwealthy mountain benefice."

This said, oft halting, we pursued our way;
Nor reach'd the village churchyard till the sun,
Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
Above the summits of the highest hills,
And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred pile
Stood open; and we enter'd. On my frame,
At such transition from the fervid air,
A grateful coolness fell, that seem'd to strike
The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
And natural reverence which the place inspired.
Not framed to nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy, for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately cross'd,
Like leafless underboughs in some thick grove,
All wither'd by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each in its ornamental scroll enclosed;
Each also crown'd with wingèd heads—a pair
Of rudely-painted cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
In seemly rows; the chancel only shew'd
Some inoffensive marks of earthly state
And vain distinction. A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined;
And marble monuments were here display'd
Upon the walls; and on the floor beneath
Sepulchral stones appear'd, with emblems graven,

And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
And shining effigies of brass inlaid.
The tribute by these various records claim'd,
Without reluctance did we pay; and read
The ordinary chronicle of birth,
Office, alliance, and promotion—all
Ending in dust; of upright magistrates,
Grave doctors strenuous for the mother church,
And uncorrupted senators, alike
To king and people true. A brazen plate,
Not easily decipher'd, told of one
Whose course of earthly honour was begun
In quality of page among the train
Of the eighth Henry, when he cross'd the seas
His royal state to shew, and prove his strength
In tournament upon the fields of France.
Another tablet register'd the death,
And praised the gallant bearing of a knight,
Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
Near this brave knight his father lay entomb'd;
And, to the silent language giving voice,
I read how, in his manhood's earlier day,
He, 'mid the afflictions of intestine war,
And rightful government subverted, found
One only solace, that he had espoused
A virtuous lady tenderly beloved
For her benign affections; and for this
Yet more endear'd to him, that in her state
Of wedlock richly crown'd with Heaven's regard,
She with a numerous issue fill'd his house,
Who throve, like plants uninjured by the storm
That laid their country waste. No need to speak
Of less particular notices assign'd
To youth or maiden gone before their time,
And matrons and unwedded sisters old;
Whose charity and goodness were rehearsed
In modest panegyric. "These dim lines,
What would they tell?" said I; but, from the task
Of puzzling out that faded narrative,
With whisper soft my venerable friend
Call'd me; and, looking down the darksome aisle,
I saw the tenant of the lonely vale
Standing apart; with curvèd arm reclined
On the baptismal font; his pallid face
Upturn'd, as if his mind were rapt, or lost
In some abstraction; gracefully he stood,
The semblance bearing of a sculptured form
That leans upon a monumental urn
In peace, from morn to night, from year to year.

Him from that posture did the sexton rouse;
Who enter'd, humming carelessly a tune,
Continuation haply of the notes
That had beguiled the work from which he came,
With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder hung;
To be deposited for future need
In their appointed place. The pale Recluse
Withdrew; and straight we follow'd to a spot
Where sun and shade were intermix'd; for there
A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
From an adjoining pasture overhung
Small space of that green churchyard with a light
And pleasant awning. On the moss-grown wall
My ancient friend and I together took
Our seats; and thus the Solitary spake,
Standing before us:—"Did you note the mien
Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
Death's hireling, who scoops out his neighbour's grave,
Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
As unconcern'd as when he plants a tree?
I was abruptly summon'd by his voice
From some affecting images and thoughts,
And from the company of serious words.
Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase
Of our sublime dependences, and hopes
For future states of being; and the wings
Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
Hover'd above our destiny on earth;
But stoop, and place the prospect of the soul
In sober contrast with reality
And man's substantial life. If this mute earth
Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,
We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and shame,
To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill
That which is done accords with what is known
To reason, and by conscience is enjoin'd;
How idly, how perversely, life's whole course,
To this conclusion deviates from the line,
Or of the end stops short, proposed to all
At its aspiring outset. Mark the babe
Not long accustom'd to this breathing world;
One that hath barely learn'd to shape a smile,
Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
With tiny fingers—to let fall a tear;
And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,
To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
The outward functions of intelligent man;

A grave proficient in amusive feats
Of puppetry, that from the lap declare
His expectations, and announce his claims
To that inheritance which millions rue
That they were ever born to! In due time
A day of solemn ceremonial comes;
When they, who for this minor hold in trust
Rights that transcend the humblest heritage
Of mere humanity, present their charge,
For this occasion daintily adorn'd,
At the baptismal font. And when the pure
And consecrating element hath cleansed
The original stain, the child is there received
Into the second ark, Christ's Church, with trust
That he, from wrath redeem'd, therein shall float
Over the billows of this troublesome world,
To the fair land of everlasting life.
Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
Are all renounced; high as the thought of man
Can carry virtue, virtue is profess'd;
A dedication made, a promise given
For due provision to control and guide,
And unremitting progress to insure
In holiness and truth."

"You cannot blame,"
Here interposing, fervently I said,
"Rites which attest that man by nature lies
Bedded for good and evil in a gulf
Fearfully low; nor will your judgment scorn
Those services whereby attempt is made
To lift the creature towards that eminence
On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
He stood; or if not so, whose top serene
At least, he feels 'tis given him to descry;
Not without aspirations evermore
Returning, and injunctions from within
Doubt to cast off and weariness; in trust
That what the soul perceives, if glory lost,
May be, through pains and persevering hope,
Recover'd; or if hitherto unknown,
Lies within reach, and one day shall be gain'd."

"I blame them not," he calmly answer'd. "No,
The outward ritual and establish'd forms
With which communities of men invest
These inward feelings, and th' aspiring views
To which the lips give public utterance,
Are both a natural process, and by me
Shall pass uncensured; though the issue prove,

Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
Incongruous, impotent, and blank. But oh!
If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,
As the lost angel by a human voice
Hath mournfully pronounced, then, in my mind,
Far better not to move at all than move
By impulse sent from such illusive power,—
That finds and cannot fasten down; that grasps
And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps;
That tempts, emboldens,—doth a while sustain,
And then betrays; accuses and inflicts
Remorseless punishment; and so retreads
Th' inevitable circle; better far
Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless peace,
By foresight or remembrance undisturb'd!

"Philosophy! and thou, more vaunted name,
Religion! with thy statelier retinue,
Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible world
Choose for your emblems whatsoe'er ye find
Of safest guidance and of firmest trust—
The torch, the star, the anchor—nor except
The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
The generations of mankind have knelt
Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
And through that conflict seeking rest—of you,
High-titled powers, am I constrain'd to ask,
Here standing, with th' unvoyageable sky
In faint reflection of infinitude,
Stretch'd overhead, and at my pensive feet
A subterraneous magazine of bones,
In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
Where are your triumphs—your dominion where—
And in what age admitted and confirm'd?
Not for a happy land do I inquire,
Island or grove, that hides a blessèd few
Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
To your serene authorities conform;
But whom, I ask, of individual souls,
Have ye withdrawn from passion's crooked ways,
Inspired, and thoroughly fortified? If the heart
Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of conscience, truth, and hope,
For one day's little compass, has preserved
From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague desire

Culpably cherish'd, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanction'd fear?"
"If this be so,
And man," said I, "be in his noblest shape
Thus pitiably infirm; then, He who made,
And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true; and surely not misplaced;
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such thoughts
Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
By which, in Christian lands from age to age
Profession mocks performance. Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which states and kingdoms utter when they talk
Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood; look we to ourselves;
A light of duty shines on every day
For all; and yet how few are warm'd or cheer'd!
How few who mingle with their fellow-men
And still remain self-govern'd, and apart,
Like this our honour'd friend; and thence acquire
Right to expect his vigorous decline,
That promises to th' end a blest old age!"

"Yet," with a smile of triumph, thus exclaim'd
The Solitary, "in the life of man,
If to the poetry of common speech
Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
A true reflection of the circling year,
With all its seasons. Grant that spring is there,
In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
Yet where is glowing summer's long rich day,
That *ought* to follow, faithfully express'd?
And mellow autumn, charged with bounteous fruit,
Where is she imaged—in what favour'd clime
Her lavish pomp and ripe magnificence?
Yet, while the better part is miss'd, the worse
In man's autumnal season is set forth
With a resemblance not to be denied,
And that contents him; bowers that hear no more
The voice of gladness, less and less supply
Of outward sunshine and internal warmth:
And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,
Foretelling total winter, blank and cold.

"How gay the habitations that adorn
This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
To give assurance of content within,
Embosom'd happiness and placid love:
As if the sunshine of the day were met
With answering brightness in the hearts of all
Who walk this favour'd ground. But chance regards,
And notice forced upon incurious ears,
These, if these only, acting in despite
Of the encomiums by my friend pronounced
On humble life, forbid the judging mind
To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
Of mountaineers, by nature's self removed
From foul temptations, and by constant care
Of a good shepherd tended, as themselves
Do tend their flocks, these share man's general lot
With little mitigation. They escape,
Perchance, guilt's heavier woes; and do not feel
The tedium of fantastic idleness;
Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
Is fashion'd like an ill-constructed tale
That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes,
And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving
Old things repeated with diminish'd grace,
And all the labour'd novelties, at best
Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
Evince the want and weakness whence they spring."

While in this serious mood we held discourse,
The reverend Pastor toward the churchyard gate
Approach'd; and, with a mild respectful air
Of native cordiality, our friend
Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
Was he received, and mutual joy prevail'd.
A while they stood in conference, and I guess
That he, who now upon the mossy wall
Sate by my side, had vanish'd, if a wish
Could have transferr'd him to his lonely house
Within the circuit of those guardian rocks.
For me, I look'd upon the pair, well-pleased
Nature had framed them both, and both were mark'd
By circumstance with intermixture fine
Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
One might be liken'd: flourishing appear'd,
Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,

The other—like a stately sycamore,
That spreads, in gentler pomp, its honey'd shade.

A general greeting was exchanged; and soon
The Pastor learn'd that his approach had given
A welcome interruption to discourse
Grave, and in truth full often sad. "Is man
A child of hope? Do generations press
On generations, without progress made?
Halts the individual, ere his hairs be gray,
Perforce? Are we a creature in whom good
Preponderates, or evil? Doth the will
Acknowledge reason's law? A living power
Is virtue—or no better than a name—
Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound?
So that the only substance which remains,
(For thus the tenor of complaint hath run,)
Among so many shadows, are the pains
And penalties of miserable life,
Doom'd to decay, and then expire in dust!
Our cogitations this way have been drawn,
These are the points," the Wanderer said, "on which
Our inquest turns. Accord, good sir, the light
Of your experience, to dispel this gloom.
By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
That frets, or languishes, be still'd and cheer'd."

"Our nature," said the Priest, in mild reply,
"Angels may weigh and fathom: they perceive,
With undistemper'd and unclouded spirit,
The object as it is; but for ourselves,
That speculative height we may not reach.
The good and evil are our own; and we
Are that which we would contemplate from far.
Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
As virtue's self; like virtue is beset
With snares; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
Blind were we without these; through these alone
Are capable to notice or discern,
Or to record! we judge, but cannot be
Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast,
Reason, best reason, is t' imperfect man
An effort only, and a noble aim;
A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
Still to be courted—never to be won.
Look forth, or each man dive into himself,
What sees he, but a creature too perturb'd,
That is transported to excess; that yearns,

Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much;
Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair.
Thus truth is miss'd, and comprehension fails;
And darkness and delusion round our path
Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
Within the very faculty of sight.

"Yet for the general purposes of faith
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best subject
The will to reason's law, can strictliest live
And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehension of those truths,
Which unassisted reason's utmost power
Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
And our regards confining within bounds
Of less exalted consciousness, through which
The very multitude are free to range,
We safely may affirm that human life
Is either fair or tempting, a soft scene
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
Or a forbidden tract of cheerless view;
Even as the same is look'd at or approach'd.
Permit me," said the Priest, continuing, "here
To use an illustration of my thought,
Drawn from the very spot on which we stand.
In changeful April, when, as he is wont,
Winter has reassumed a short-lived sway
And whiten'd all the surface of the fields,
If, from the sullen region of the north,
Towards the circuit of this holy ground,
Your walk conducts you, ere the vigorous sun,
High climbing, hath attain'd his noon-tide height,
These mounds, transversely lying side by side
From east to west, before you will appear
A dreary plain of unillumined snow,
With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;
On the same circuit of this churchyard ground
Look, from the quarter whence the lord of light,
Of life, of love, and gladness, doth dispense
His beams, which, unexcluded in their fall,
Upon the southern side of every grave
Have gently exercised a melting power,
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,
All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
Hopeful and cheerful—vanish'd is the snow,
Vanish'd or hidden; and the whole domain,

To some, too lightly minded, might appear
A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.
This contrast, not unsuitable to life,
Is to that other state more apposite,
Death, and its twofold aspect; wintry one,
Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out—
The other, which the ray divine hath touch'd,
Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring."

"We see, then, as we feel," the Wanderer thus
With a complacent animation spake,
"And, in your judgment, sir, the mind's repose
On evidence is not to be insured
By act of naked reason. Moral truth
Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
And which, once built, retains a steadfast shape
And undisturb'd proportions; but a thing
Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fix'd in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves. With joy sincere
I resalute these sentiments, confirm'd
By your authority. But how acquire
The inward principle that gives effect
To outward argument, the passive will
Meek to admit, the active energy,
Strong and unbounded to embrace, and firm
To keep and cherish—how shall man unite
A self-forgetting tenderness of heart
And earth-despising dignity of soul—
Wise in that union, and without it blind?"

"The way," said I, "to court, if not obtain
The ingenuous mind, apt to be set aright,
This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
Declared at large; and by what exercise
From visible nature or the inner self
Power may be train'd, and renovation brought
To those who need the gift. But, after all,
Is aught so certain as that man is doom'd
To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance—
The natural roof of that dark house in which
His soul is pent? How little can be known!
This is the wise man's sigh; how far we err—
This is the good man's not unfrequent pang.
And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
Whom a benign necessity compels
To follow reason's least ambitious course;
Such do I mean, who, unperplex'd by doubt
And unincited by a wish to look

Into high objects further than they may,
Pace to and fro, from morn till eventide,
The narrow avenue of daily toil,
For daily bread."
"Yes," buoyantly exclaim'd
The pale Recluse—"praise to the sturdy plough,
And patient spade and shepherd's simple crook,
And ponderous loom resounding while it holds
Body and mind in one captivity;
And let the light mechanic tool be hail'd
With honour, which, encasing by the power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the heart!
Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
By slow solicitaion, earth to yield
Her annual bounty sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance, you would I extol
Not for gross good alone which ye produce,
But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest content,
Would I had ne'er renounced it!"

A slight flush
Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old man's cheek; but, at this closing turn
Of self-reproach, it pass'd away. Said he,
"That which we feel we utter: as we think
So have we argued; reaping for our pains
No visible recompence. For our relief,
You," to the Pastor turning, thus he spake,
"Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help? The mine of real life
Dig for us; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we by pains
Fruitless as those of aëry alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
Around us a domain where you have long
Held spiritual sway, have guided and consoled,
And watch'd the outward course and inner heart.
Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
He is who cultivates yon hanging field;
What qualities of mind she bears, who comes,
For morn and evening service, with her pail,
To that green pasture; place before our sight

The family who dwell within yon house
Fenced round with glittering laurel; or in that
Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,
And have the dead around us, take from them
Your instances; for they are both best known,
And by frail man most equitably judged.
Epitomize the life; pronounce, you can,
Authentic epitaphs on some of these
Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,
Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet.
So, by your records, may our doubts be solved;
And so, not searching higher, we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human kind,
And look upon the dust of man with awe."

The Priest replied:—"An office you impose
For which peculiar requisites are mine;
Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the task
Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
That they whom death has hidden from our sight
Are worthiest of the mind's regard; with these
The future cannot contradict the past:
Mortality's last exercise and proof
Is undergone; the transit made that shews
The very soul, reveal'd as it departs.
Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
One picture from the living.

"You behold,
High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
With stony barrenness, a shining speck
Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
Brush it away, or cloud pass over it;
And such it might be deem'd—a sleeping sunbeam;
But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
Cut off, an island in the dusky waste;
And that attractive brightness is its own.
The lofty site, by Nature framed, to tempt,
Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones,
The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
For opportunity presented thence
Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
And ocean, and look down upon the works,
The habitations, and the ways of men,
Himself unseen. But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipp'd his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon green fields;
And no such visionary views belong

To those who occupy and till the ground,
And on the bosom of the mountain dwell—
A wedded pair in childless solitude.
A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
Back'd also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
Of birch-trees waves above the chimney-top;
In shape, in size, and colour, an abode
Such as in unsafe times of Border war
Might have been wish'd for and contrived, to elude
The eye of roving plunderer—for their need
Suffices; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong south-west,
In anger blowing from the distant sea.
Alone within her solitary hut;
There, or within the compass of her fields,
At any moment may the dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest
And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
By intermingled work of house and field
The summer's day, and winter's; with success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
Until the expected hour at which her mate
From the far-distant quarry's vault returns,
And by his converse crowns a silent day
With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
In scale of culture, few among my flock
Hold lower rank than this sequester'd pair:
But humbleness of heart descends from heaven:
And that best gift of Heav'n hath fall'n on them—
Abundant recompence for every want.
Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy these!
Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering Scripture texts
For the mind's government, or temper's peace;
And recommending for their mutual need,
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity!"

"Much was I pleased," the gray-hair'd Wanderer said,
"When to those shining fields our notice first
You turn'd; and yet more pleased have from your lips
Gather'd this fair report of those who dwell
In that retirement; whither, by such course
Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
A lone wayfaring man, I once was brought.
Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell
While I was traversing yon mountain-pass,
And night succeeded with unusual gloom,

So that my feet and hands at length became
Guides better than mine eyes—until a light
High in the gloom appear'd, too high, methought,
For human habitation; but I long'd
To reach it, destitute of other hope.
I look'd with steadiness as sailors look
On the north star, or watch-tower's distant lamp,
And saw the light, now fix'd, and shifting now,
Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
Of never-varying motion, to and fro.
'It is no night-fire of the naked hills,'
Said I—'some friendly covert must be near.'
With this persuasion thitherward my steps
I turn, and reach at last the guiding light;
Joy to myself! but to the heart of her
Who there was standing on the open hill
(The same kind matron whom your tongue hath praised)
Alarm and disappointment! The alarm
Ceased, when she learn'd through what mishap I came
And by what help had gain'd those distant fields.
Drawn from her cottage, on that open height,
Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
Or paced the ground, to guide her husband home
By that unwearied signal, kenn'd afar;
An anxious duty! which the lofty site,
Far from all public road or beaten way,
And traversed only by a few faint paths,
Imposes, whensoe'er untoward chance
(Such chance is rare) detains him till the night
Falls black upon the hills. 'But come,' she said,
'Come, let me lead you to our poor abode:
Behind those rocks it stands, as if it shunn'd,
In churlishness, the eye of all mankind;
But the few guests who seek the door receive
Most hearty welcome.' Entering I beheld
A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
Sate down; and to her office, with leave ask'd,
The dame return'd. Before that glowing pile
Of mountain turf required the builder's hand
Its wasted splendour to repair, the door
Open'd and she re-enter'd with glad looks,
Her helpmate following. Hospitable fare,
Frank conversation, made the evening's treat:
Need a bewilder'd traveller wish for more?
But more was given; the eye, the mind, the heart,
Found exercise in noting as we sate
By the bright fire, the good man's face—composed
Of features elegant; an open brow
Of undisturb'd humanity; a cheek

Suffused with something of a feminine hue;
Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard;
But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
Expression slowly varying, that evinced
A tardy apprehension. From a fount
Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
But honour'd once, these features and that mien
May have descended, though I see them here.
In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
This pleasing fancy (cherish'd and upheld
By sundry recollections of such fall
From high to low, ascent from low to high,
As books record, and even the careless mind
Cannot but notice among men and things)
Went with me to the place of my repose.

"Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of day,
I yet had risen too late to interchange
A morning salutation with my host,
Gone forth already to the far-off seat
Of his day's work. 'Three dark mid-winter months
Pass,' said the matron, 'and I never see,
Save when the Sabbath brings its kind release,
My helpmate's face by light of day. He quits
His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
And, through Heaven's blessing, thus we gain the bread
For which we pray; and for the wants provide
Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.
Companions have I many; many friends,
Dependents, comforters: my wheel, my fire,
All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood,
And the wild birds, that gather round my porch.
This honest sheep-dog's countenance I read;
With him can talk; nor seldom waste a word
On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.
And if the blustering wind that drives the clouds,
Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
And makes me pastime when our tempers suit:
But, above all, my thoughts are my support.'
The matron ended, nor could I forbear
To exclaim, 'O happy! yielding to the law
Of these privations, richer in the main:
While thankless thousands are oppress'd and clogg'd
By ease and leisure; by the very wealth
And pride of opportunity made poor;

While tens of thousands falter in their path,
And sink, through utter want of cheering light;
For you the hours of labour do not flag;
For you each evening hath its shining star,
And every Sabbath-day its golden sun.'"

"Yes!" said the Solitary, with a smile
That seem'd to break from an expanding heart;
"The untutor'd bird may found, and so construct,
And with such soft materials line, her nest,
Fix'd in the centre of a prickly brake,
That the thorns wound her not; they only guard.
Powers, not unjustly liken'd to those gifts
Of happy instinct which the woodland bird
Shares with her species, Nature's grace sometimes
Upon the individual doth confer,
Among the higher creatures born and train'd,
To use of reason. And I own, that, tired
Of the ostentatious world—a swelling stage,
With empty actions and vain passions stuff'd,
And from the private struggles of mankind
Hoping for less than I could wish to hope,
Far less than once I trusted and believed—
I love to hear of those who, not contending
Nor summon'd to contend for virtue's prize,
Miss not the humbler good at which they aim;
Bless'd with a kindly faculty to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
Into their contraries the petty plagues
And hindrances with which they stand beset.
In early youth, among my native hills,
I knew a Scottish peasant who possess'd
A few small crofts of stone-encumber'd ground;
Masses of every shape and size, that lay
Scatter'd about beneath the mould'ring walls
Of a rough precipice; and some, apart,
In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
As if the moon had shower'd them down in spite:
But he repined not. Though the plough was scared
By these obstructions, 'Round the shady stones
A fertilizing moisture,' said the swain,
'Gathers, and is preserved; and feeding dews
And damps, through all the droughty summer day
From out their substance issuing, maintain
Herbage that never fails: no grass springs up
So green, so fresh, so plentiful as mine!'
See, in this well-condition'd soul, a third
To match with your good couple, that put forth
Their homely graces on the mountain-side.

But thinly sown these natures; rare, at least,
The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
That yields such kindly product. He, whose bed
Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor pensioner
Brought yesterday from our sequester'd dell
Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
If living now, could otherwise report
Of rustic loneliness: that gray-hair'd orphan—
So call him, for humanity to him
No parent was—could feelingly have told,
In life, in death, what solitude can breed
Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice;
Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure.
But your compliance, sir, with our request
My words too long have hinder'd."

Undeterr'd,
Perhaps incited, rather, by these shocks,
In no ungracious opposition, given
To the confiding spirit of his own
Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor said,
Around him looking: "Where shall I begin?
Who shall be first selected from my flock,
Gather'd together in their peaceful fold?"
He paused, and having lifted up his eyes
To the pure heaven, he cast them down again
Upon the earth beneath his feet, and spake:—

"To a mysteriously consorted pair
This place is consecrate; to death and life,
And to the best affections that proceed
From their conjunction. Consecrate to faith
In Him who bled for man upon the cross,
Hallow'd to revelation, and no less
To reason's mandates, and the hopes divine
Of pure imagination; above all,
To charity and love, that have provided,
Within these precincts, a capacious bed
And receptacle, open to the good
And evil, to the just and the unjust,
In which they find an equal resting-place;
Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,
Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
Within the bosom of yon crystal lake,
And end their journey in the same repose.

"And blest are they who sleep; and we that know,
While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,

That all beneath us by the wings are cover'd
Of motherly humanity, outspread
And gathering all within their tender shade,
Though loath and slow to come. A battle-field,
In stillness left, when slaughter is no more.
With this compared is a strange spectacle!
A rueful sight, the wild shore strewn with wrecks,
And trod by people in afflicted quest
Of friends and kindred, whom the angry sea
Restores not to their prayers! Ah, who would think
That all the scatter'd subjects which compose
Earth's melancholy vision through the space
Of all her climes,—these wretched, these depraved,
To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
From the delights of charity cut off,
To pity dead, the oppressor and the oppress'd,—
Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
And slaves who will consent to be destroy'd,
Were of one species with the shelter'd few,
Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
Did lodge, in an appropriated spot,
This file of infants; some that never breathed
The vital air; and others who, allow'd
That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
Or with too brief a warning, to admit
Administration of the holy rite
That lovingly consigns the babe to th' arms
Of Jesus, and His everlasting care.
These, that in trembling hope are laid apart;
And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast
That feeds him; and the tott'ring little one,
Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of infancy first blooms upon his cheek;
The thinking, thoughtless schoolboy; the bold youth,
Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid,
Smitten while all the promises of life
Are opening round her; those of middle age,
Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
Like pillars fix'd more firmly, as might seem,
And more secure, by very weight of all
That, for support, rests on them; the decay'd
And burthensome; and, lastly, that poor few
Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
The earliest summon'd and the longest spared,—
Are here deposited, with tribute paid
Various; but unto each some tribute paid,
As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,

Society were touch'd with kind concern,
And gentle 'Nature grieved that one should die;'
Or, if the change demanded no regret,
Observed the liberating stroke—and bless'd.
And whence that tribute—wherefore these regards?
Not from the naked *heart* alone of man
(Though framed to high distinction upon earth
As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
His own peculiar utterance for distress
Or gladness)—No," the philosophic Priest
Continued, "'tis not in the vital seat
Of feeling to produce them, without aid
From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure;
With her two faculties of eye and ear,—
The one by which a creature, whom his sins
Have render'd prone, can upward look to heaven—
The other, that empowers him to perceive
The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
Whisp'ring those truths in stillness, which the Word
To the four quarters of the winds proclaims.
Not without such assistance could the use
Of these benign observances prevail.
Thus are they born, thus foster'd and maintain'd;
And, by the care prospective of our wise
Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks,
The fluctuation and decay of things,
Embodied and establish'd these high truths
In solemn institutions: men convinced
That life is love and immortality,
The being one, and one the element.
There lies the channel and original bed,
From the beginning hollow'd out and scoop'd
For man's affections—else betray'd and lost,
And swallow'd up 'mid deserts infinite!
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of prescient reason; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.
The faith partaking of those holy times,
Life, I repeat, is energy of love,
Divine or human, exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation, and ordain'd,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy!"

BOOK VI.

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

Poet's address to the State and Church of England—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient worthies of the Church—He begins his narratives with an instance of unrequited love—Anguish of mind subdued—And how—The lonely miner an instance of perseverance, which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some stranger whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonising influence of solitude on two men of opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in public life—The rule by which peace may be obtained expressed—And where—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality—Answer of the Pastor—What subjects he will exclude from his narrative; conversation upon this—Instance of an unamiable character, a female—And why given—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer, from unguarded and betrayed love—Instance of heavier guilt—And its consequences to the offender—With this instance of a marriage contract broken is contrasted one of a widower, evincing his faithful affection towards his deceased wife by his care of their female children—Second marriage of widower prudential and happy.

HAIL to the crown by freedom shaped to gird
An English sovereign's brow—and to the throne
Whereon he sits! whose deep foundations lie
In veneration and the people's love;
Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
Hail to the State of England! And conjoin
With this a salutation as devout,
Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church;
Founded in truth; by blood of martyrdom
Cemented; by the hands of wisdom rear'd
In beauty of holiness, with order'd pomp,
Decent and unreproved. The voice, that greets
The majesty of both, shall pray for both;
That, mutually protected and sustain'd,
They may endure as long as sea surrounds
This favour'd land, or sunshine warms her soil.
And oh, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains!
Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-towers,
And spires whose "silent finger points to heaven;"
Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk
Of ancient minster, lifted above the cloud
Of the dense air which town or city breeds
To intercept the sun's glad beams—ne'er may
That true succession fail of English hearts,
That can perceive, not less than heretofore,
Our ancestors did feelingly perceive,
What in those holy structures ye possess
Of ornamental interest, and the charm
Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
And human charity, and social love.

Thus never shall th' indignities of time
Approach their reverend graces unopposed;
Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
Their fair proportions; nor the blinder rage
Of bigot zeal madly to overturn;
And, if the desolating hand of war
Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
Upon the throng'd abodes of busy men
(Depraved, and ever prone to fill their minds
Exclusively with transitory things)
An air and mien of dignified pursuit;
Of sweet civility on rustic wilds.
The poet, fostering for his native land
Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
Of those pure altars worthy; ministers
Detach'd from pleasure, to the love of gain
Superior, insusceptible of pride,
And by ambition's longings undisturb'd;
Men whose delight is where their duty leads
Or fixes them, whose least distinguish'd day
Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre
Which makes the Sabbath lovely in the sight
Of blessèd angels pitying human cares.
And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
To be perpetually attack'd by foes
Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
For her defence, replenish'd with a band
Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
Thoroughly disciplined; nor (if in course
Of the revolving world's disturbance
Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven avert!
To meet such a trial) from their spiritual sires
Degenerate; who, constrain'd to wield the sword
Of disputation, shrunk not, though assail'd
With hostile din, and combating in sight;
Of angry umpires, partial and unjust;
And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in fire,
So to declare the conscience satisfied:
Nor for their bodies would accept release;
But, blessing God and praising Him, bequeath'd
With their last breath, from out the smouldering flame
The faith which they by diligence had earn'd,
And through illuminating grace received,
For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
O high example, constancy divine!

Even such a man (inheriting the zeal
And from the sanctity of elder times
Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom,

If multiplied, and in their stations set,
Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
Spread true religion and her genuine fruits)
Before me stood that day; on holy ground
Fraught with the relics of mortality,
Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
To lofty raised; and to the highest last;
The head and mighty paramount of truths;
Immortal life in never-fading worlds,
For mortal creatures, conquer'd and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
Announced, as a preparatory act
Of reverence to the spirit of the place,
The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground;
Not, as before, like one oppress'd with awe,
But with a mild and social cheerfulness;
Then to the Solitary turn'd and spake:—

"At morn or eve, in your retired domain,
Perchance you not unfrequently have mark'd
A visitor, intent upon the task
Of prying, low and high, for herbs and flowers;
Too delicate employ, as would appear,
For one who, though of drooping mien, had yet
From nature's kindliness received a frame
Robust as ever rural labour bred."

The Solitary answer'd:—"Such a form
Full well I recollect. We often cross'd
Each other's path; but, as th' intruder seem'd
Fondly to prize the silence which he kept,
And I as willingly did cherish mine,
We met, and pass'd like shadows. I have heard,
From my good host, that he was crazed in brain
By unrequited love, and scaled the rocks,
Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
To cure his malady!"

The Vicar smiled:
"Alas! before to-morrow's sun goes down,
His habitation will be here: for him
That open grave is destined."

"Died he, then,
Of pain and grief?" the Solitary ask'd.
"Believe it not—oh, never can that be!"

"He loved," the Vicar answer'd, "deeply loved,
Loved fondly, truly, fervently; and pined
When he had told his love, and sued in vain;
Rejected, yea, repell'd; and, if with scorn

Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 'tis but
A high-prized plume which female beauty wears.
That he could brook, and glory in; but when
The tidings came that she whom he had woo'd
Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope;
Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth
An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour.
Lost was she--lost! nor could the sufferer say
That in the act of preference he had been
Unjustly dealt with; but the maid was gone!
She whose dear name with unregarded sighs
He long had bless'd, whose image was preserved—
Shrined in his breast with fond idolatry,
Had vanish'd from his prospects and desires;
Not by translation to the heavenly choir
Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no!
She lives another's wishes to complete,—
'Joy be their lot, and happiness, he cried,—
'His lot and hers, as misery is mine!'

"Such was that strong concussion; but the man,
Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some huge oak
By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
The steadfast quiet natural to a mind
Of composition gentle and sedate,
And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
Of rustic parents bred, he had been train'd
(So prompted their aspiring wish) to skill
In numbers, and the sedentary art
Of penmanship,—with pride profess'd, and taught
By his endeavours in the mountain dales.
Now, those sad tidings weighing on his heart,
To books, and papers, and the studious desk,
He stoutly re-address'd himself—resolved
To quell his pain, and enter on the path
Of old pursuits with keener appetite
And closer industry. Of what ensued
Within his soul no outward sign appear'd,
Till a betraying sickliness was seen
To tinge his cheek; and through his frame it crept
With slow mutation unconcealable;
Such universal change as autumn makes
In the fair body of a leafy grove
Discolour'd, then divested. 'Tis affirm'd
By poets skill'd in Nature's secret ways
That Love would not submit to be controll'd
By mastery: and the good man lack'd not friends

Who strove t' instil this truth into his mind,
A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed.
'Go to the hills,' said one, 'remit a while
This baneful diligence: at early morn
Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and woods;
And, leaving it to others to foretell,
By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
Do you, for your own benefit, construct
A calendar of flow'rs, pluck'd as they blow
Where health abides, and cheerfulness and peace.'
Th' attempt was made; 'tis needless to report
How hopelessly; but innocence is strong,
And an entire simplicity of mind
A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven,
That opens, for such sufferers, relief
Within their souls, a fount of grace divine;
And doth commend their weakness and disease
To Nature's care, assisted in her office
By all the elements that round her wait
To generate, to preserve, and to restore;
And by her beautiful array of forms
Shedding sweet influence from above, or pure
Delight exhaling from the ground they tread."

"Impute it not t' impatience, if," exclaim'd
The Wanderer, "I infer that he was heal'd
By perseverance in the course prescribed."

"You do not err: the powers, which had been lost
By slow degrees, were gradually regain'd;
The fluttering nerves composed; the beating heart
In rest establish'd; and the jarring thoughts
To harmony restored. But yon dark mould
Will cover him; in height of strength—to earth
Hastily smitten, by a fever's force;
Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
Time to look back with tenderness on her
Whom he had loved in passion, and to send
Some farewell words; and, with those words, a prayer
That, from his dying hand, she would accept
Of his possessions, that which most he prized,
A book, upon the surface of whose leaves
Some chosen plants, disposed with nicest care,
In undecaying beauty were preserved.
Mute register, to him, of time and place,
And various fluctuations in the breast;
To her, a monument of faithful love
Conquer'd, and in tranquillity retain'd.

"Close to his destined habitation, lies
One whose endeavours did at length achieve
A victory less worthy of regard,
Though marvellous in its kind. A place exists
High in these mountains, that allured a band
Of keen adventurers to unite their pains,
In search of treasure there by nature form'd,
And there conceal'd: but they who tried were foil'd,
And all desisted, all, save him alone;
Who, taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
And trusting only to his own weak hands,
Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
Unseconded, uncountenanced; then, as time
Pass'd on, while still his lonely efforts found
No recompence, derided; and at length,
By many pitied, as insane of mind;
By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
Of subterranean spirits, feeding hope
By various mockery of sight and sound;
Hope, after hope, encouraged and destroy'd.
But when the lord of seasons had matured
The fruits of earth through space of twice ten years,
The mountain's entrails offer'd to the view
Of the old man, and to his trembling grasp,
His bright, his long-deferr'd, his dear reward.
Not with more transport did Columbus greet
A world, his rich discovery! But our swain,
A very hero till his point was gain'd,
Proved all unable to support the weight
Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he look'd
With an unsettled liberty of thought,
Of schemes and wishes; in the daylight walk'd
Giddy and restless; ever and anon
Quaff'd in his gratitude immoderate cups;
And truly might be said to die of joy!
He vanish'd; but conspicuous to this day
The path remains that link'd his cottage-door
To the mine's mouth; a long and slanting track,
Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
Worn by his daily visits to and from
The darksome centre of a constant hope.
This vestige, neither force of beating rain,
Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw,
Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away;
And it is named, in memory of the event,
The 'Path of Perseverance.'"
"Thou, from whom
Man has his strength," exclaim'd the Wanderer, "oh!
Do Thou direct it! To the virtuous grant

The penetrative eye which can perceive
In this blind world the guiding vein of hope,
That, like this labourer, such may dig their way,
'Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;'
Grant to the wise *his* firmness of resolve!"

"That prayer were not superfluous," said the Priest,
"Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
That Westminster, for Britain's glory, holds
Within the bosom of her awful pile,
Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
Which wafts that prayer to Heaven, is due to all,
Wherever laid, who living fell below
There virtue's humbler mark; a sigh of *pain*
If to the opposite extreme they sank.
How would you pity her who yonder rests;
Him, farther off; the pair, who here are laid;
But, above all, that mixture of earth's mould
Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
Recalls! *He* lived not till his locks were nipp'd
By seasonable frost of age; nor died
Before his temples, prematurely forced
To mix the manly brown with silver gray,
Give obvious instance of the sad effect
Produced, when thoughtless folly hath usurp'd
The natural crown which sage experience wears.
Gay, volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
And prompt to exhibit all that he possess'd
Or could perform; a zealous actor, hired
Into the troop of mirth, a soldier—sworn
Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
Such was he; yet, as if within his frame
Two several souls alternately had lodged,
Two sets of manners could the youth put on;
And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird
That writhes and chatters in her wiry cage,
Was graceful, when it pleased him, smooth and still
As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf,
That flutters on the bough, more light than he;
And not a flower, that droops in the green shade,
More winningly reserved! If ye inquire
How such consummate elegance was bred
Amid these wilds; a composition framed
Of qualities so adverse—to diffuse,
Where'er he moved, diversified delight;
A simple answer may suffice, even this,—
'Twas Nature's will; who sometimes undertakes,

For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
Hence, for this favourite—lavishly endow'd
With personal gifts, and bright instinctive wit,
While both, embellishing each other, stood
Yet farther recommended by the charm
Of fine demeanour, and by dance and song,
And skill in letters, every fancy shaped
Fair expectations; nor, when to the world's
Capacious field forth went the adventurer, there
Were he and his attainments overlook'd,
Or scantily rewarded; but all hopes,
Cherish'd for him, he suffer'd to depart,
Like blighted buds; or clouds that mimick'd land
Before the sailors eye; or diamond drops
That sparkling deck'd the morning grass; or aught
That *was* attractive—and hath ceased to be!
Yet when this prodigal return'd, the rites
Of joyful greeting were on him bestow'd,
Who by humiliation undeterr'd,
Sought for his weariness a place of rest
Within his father's gates. Whence came he?—clothed
In tatter'd garb, from hovels where abides
Necessity, the stationary host
Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns,
Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
And the owl's prey; none permanently house,
But many harbour; from these haunts, to which
He had descended from the proud saloon,
He came, the ghost of beauty and of health,
The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
In strength, in power refitted, he renew'd
His suit to fortune; and she smiled again
Upon a fickle ingrate. Thrice he rose,
Thrice sank as willingly. For he, whose nerves
Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his voice
Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
By the nice finger of fair ladies touch'd,
In glittering halls, was able to derive
Not less enjoyment from an abject choice.
Who happier for the moment? Who more blithe
Than this fallen spirit? in those dreary holds
His talents lending to exalt the freaks
Of merry-making beggars,—now, provoked
To laughter multiplied in louder peals
By his malicious wit; then, all enchain'd
With mute astonishment, themselves to see
In their own arts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
As by the very presence of the fiend

Who dictates and inspires illusive feats,
For knavish purposes! The city, too,
(With shame I speak it,) to her guilty bowers
Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
As there to linger, there to eat his bread,
Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment;
Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
Truths I record to many known, for such
The not unfrequent tenor of his boast,
In ears that relish'd the report; but all
Was from his parents happily conceal'd;
Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
They also were permitted to receive
His last, repentant breath; and closed his eyes,
No more to open on that irksome world
Where he had long existed in the state
Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatch'd,
Though from another sprung of different kind,
Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,
Distracted in propensity; content
With neither element of good or ill,
And yet in both rejoicing; man unblest;
Of contradictions infinite the slave,
Till his deliverance, when mercy made him
One with himself, and one with those who sleep."

"'Tis strange," observed the Solitary; "strange
It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
That in a land where charity provides
For all who can no longer feed themselves,
A man like this should choose to bring his shame
To the parental door; and with his sighs
Infect the air which he had freely breathed
In happy infancy. He could not pine,
Whene'er rejected, howsoe'er forlorn,
Through lack of converse; no, he must have found
Abundant exercise for thought and speech
In his dividual being, self-review'd,
Self-catechised, self-punish'd. Some there are
Who, drawing near their final home, and much
And daily longing that the same were reach'd,
Would rather shun than seek the fellowship
Of kindred mould. Such haply here are laid!"

"Yes," said the Priest, "the genius of our hills—
Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
Round his domain, desirous not alone
To keep his own, but also to exclude

All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
Even by this studied depth of privacy,
The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
In place from outward molestation free,
Helps to eternal ease. Of many such
Could I discourse; but as their stay was brief,
So their departure only left behind
Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace
Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair
Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
Meeting as strangers, in a petty town,
Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
Of this far-winding vale, remain'd as friends
True to their choice; and gave their bones in trust
To this loved cemetery, here to lodge,
With unescutcheon'd privacy interr'd
Far from the family vault. A chieftain, one
By right of birth; within whose spotless breast
The fire of ancient Caledonia burn'd;
He, with the foremost whose impatience hail'd
The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
Aroused his clan; and, fighting at their head,
With his brave sword endeavour'd to prevent
Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped
From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
He fled; and when the lenient hand of time
Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gain'd,
For his obscured condition, an obscure
Retreat within this nook of English ground.

"The other, born in Britain's southern tract,
Had fix'd his milder loyalty, and placed
His gentler sentiments of love and hate
There, where they placed them who in conscience prized
The new succession, as a line of kings
Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
Against the dire assaults of Papacy
And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
On the distemper'd flood of public life,
And cause for most rare triumph will be thine,
If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,
The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not, soon
Or late, a perilous master. He, who oft,
Under the battlements and stately trees
That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
Had moralised on this, and other truths
Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied,

Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitterness,
When he had crush'd a plentiful estate
By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
In Britain's senate. Fruitless was th' attempt;
And while the uproar of that desperate strife
Continued yet to vibrate on his ear,
The vanquish'd Whig, beneath a *borrow'd* name,
(For the mere sound and echo of his own
Haunted him with sensations of disgust
Which he was glad to lose,) slunk from the world
To the deep shade of these untravell'd wilds;
In which the Scottish laird had long possess'd
An undisturb'd abode. Here, then, they met,
Two doughty champions; flaming Jacobite
And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
That losses and vexations less severe
Than those which they had severally sustain'd,
Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
My reverend father tell that, 'mid the calm
Of that small town encountering thus, they fill'd,
Daily, its bowling-green with harmless strife;
Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church,
And vex'd the market-place. But in the breasts
Of these opponents gradually was wrought,
With little change of general sentiment,
Such change towards each other, that their days
By choice were spent in constant fellowship;
And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
Those very bickerings made them love it more.

"A favourite boundary to their lengthen'd walks
This churchyard was. And, whether they had come
Treading their path in sympathy, and link'd
In social converse, or by some short space
Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
One spirit seldom fail'd to extend its sway
Over both minds, when they a while had mark'd
The visible quiet of this holy ground,
And breathed its soothing air—the spirit of hope
And saintly magnanimity—that, spurning
The field of selfish difference and dispute,
And every care which transitory things,
Earth, and the kingdoms of the earth create,
Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarr'd
Which else the Christian virtue might have claim'd.
There live who yet remember here to have seen

Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
Of an old yew, their favourite resting-place.
But, as the remnant of the long-lived tree
Was disappearing by a swift decay,
They, with joint care, determined to erect,
Upon its site, a dial, which should stand
For public use; and also might survive
As their own private monument: for this
Was the particular spot in which they wish'd
(And Heaven was pleased to accomplish the desire)
That, undivided, their remains should lie.
So, where the moulder'd tree had stood, was raised
Yon structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
That to the decorated pillar lead,
A work of art, more sumptuous, as might seem,
Than suits this place; yet built in no proud scorn
Of rustic homeliness; they only aim'd
To insure for it respectful guardianship,
Around the margin of the plate, whereon
The shadow falls, to note the stealthy hours,
Winds an inscriptive legend." At these words
Thither we turn'd; and gather'd as we read,
The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couch'd:—
"Time flies; it is his melancholy task
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And reproduce the troubles he destroys.
But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
Discerning mortal, do thou serve the will
Of time's eternal Master, and that peace,
Which the world wants, shall be for thee confirm'd!"

"Smooth verse, inspired by no unletter'd muse,"
Exclaim'd the sceptic, "and the strain of thought
Accords with Nature's language; the soft voice
Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks
Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
If, then, their blended influence be not lost
Upon our hearts—not wholly lost, I grant,
Even upon mine—the more are we required
To feel for those among our fellow-men,
Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
Are yet made desperate by 'too quick a sense
Of constant infelicity'—cut off
From peace, like exiles on some barren rock,
Their life's appointed prison; not more free
Than sentinels, between two armies set,
With nothing better, in the chill night air,
Than their own thoughts to comfort them. Say why
That ancient story of Prometheus chain'd?

The vulture—th' inexhaustible repast
Drawn from his vitals. Say what meant the woes
By Tantalus entail'd upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes.
Fictions in form, but in their substance truths—
Tremendous truths! familiar to the men
Of long-past times; nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's frock of native gray
For robes with regal purple tinged! convert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp
Of circumstance, and here the tragic muse
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, beneath the shadowy hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

"Though," said the Priest, in answer, "these be terms
Which a divine philosophy rejects,
We, whose establish'd and unfailing trust
Is in controlling Providence, admit
That through all stations human life abounds
With mysteries; for if Faith were left untried,
How could the might that lurks within her then
Be shewn? her glorious excellence—that ranks
Among the first of powers and virtues—proved?
Our system is not fashion'd to preclude
That sympathy which you for others ask;
And I could tell, not travelling for my theme
Beyond the limits of these humble graves,
Of strange disasters; but I pass them by,
Loath to disturb what Heaven hath hush'd in peace.
Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
Of man degraded in his Maker's sight
By the deformities of brutish vice:
For, though from these materials might be framed
Harsh portraiture, in which a vulgar face
And a coarse outside of repulsive life
And unaffecting manners may at once
Be recognized by all"——
"Ah! do not think,"
The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaim'd,
"Wish could be ours that you, for such poor gain
(Gain shall I call it?—gain of what?—for whom?)
Should breathe a word tending to violate
Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look for
In slight of that forbearance and reserve
Which common human-heartedness inspires,

And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else."

"True," said the Solitary; "be it far
From us to infringe the laws of charity.
Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced;
This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
Wisdom enjoins; but if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
Colours as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As by the rivulet, sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake."
"Small risk," said I,
"Of such illusion do we here incur;
Temptation here is none to exceed the truth!
No evidence appears that they who rest
Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
Or of remembrance e'en, deserved or not.
Green is the churchyard, beautiful and green,
Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge;
A heaving surface, almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones,
And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
And everlasting flowers. These dalesmen trust
The lingering gleam of their departed lives
To oral records and the silent heart:
Depository faithful and more kind
Than fondest epitaphs: for, if it fail,
What boots the sculptured tomb? And who can blame,
Who rather would not envy, men that feel
This mutual confidence; if from such source
The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
And general humility in death?
Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring
From disregard of time's destructive power,
As only capable to prey on things
Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

"Yet, in less simple districts, where we see
Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone
In courting notice, and the ground all paved
With commendations of departed worth,
Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives,
Of each domestic charity fulfill'd,
And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part,
Though with the silence pleased which here prevails,
Among those fair recitals also range,
Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.

And, in the centre of a world whose soil
Is rank with all unkindness, compass'd round
With such memorials, I have sometimes felt
That 'twas no momentary happiness
To have *one* enclosure where the voice that speaks
In envy or detraction is not heard;
Which malice may not enter; where the trace
Of evil inclinations is unknown;
Where love and pity tenderly unite
With resignation; and no jarring tone
Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
Of amity and gratitude."
" Thus sanction'd,
The Pastor said, "I willingly confine
My narrative to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
And admiration; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts
Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladden'd eyes
Of Nature's unambitious underwood,
And flowers that prosper in the shade. And when
I speak of such among my flock as swerved
Or fell, those only will I single out
Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
Than brotherly forgiveness may attend;
To such will we restrict our notice, else
Better my tongue were mute. And yet there are,
I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
For strength to persevere and to support,
And energy to conquer and repel,
These elements of virtue, that declare
The native grandeur of the human soul,
Are ofttimes not unprofitably shewn
In the perverseness of a selfish course:
Truth every day exemplified, no less
In the gray cottage by the murmuring stream
Than the fantastic conqueror's roving camp,
Or in the factious senate, unappall'd,
While merciless proscription ebbs and flows.
There," said the Vicar, pointing as he spake,
"A woman rests in peace; surpass'd by few
In power of mind and eloquent discourse.
Tall was her stature, her complexion dark
And saturnine; her port erect, her head
Not absolutely raised, as if to hold
Converse with heaven, nor yet depress'd tow'rds earth,
But in projection carried, as she walk'd

For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes:
Wrinkled and furrow'd with habitual thought
Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare
Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
She, 'mid the humble flow'rets of the vale,
Tower'd like the imperial thistle, not unfurnish'd
With its appropriate grace, yet rather framed
To be admired, than coveted and loved.
Even at that age she ruled as sovereign queen
Among her playmates; else their simple sports
Had wanted power to occupy a mind
Held in subjection by a strong control
Of studious application, self-imposed.
Books were her creditors; to them she paid,
With pleasing anxious eagerness, the hours
Which they exacted; were it time allow'd,
Or seized upon by stealth, or fairly won,
By stretch of industry from other tasks.
Oh! pang of sorrowful regret for them
Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthrall'd,
That they have lived for harsher servitude,
Whether in soul, in body, or estate!
Such doom was hers; yet nothing could subdue
Her keen desire for knowledge, or efface
Those brighter images, by books impress'd
Upon her memory; faithfully as stars
That occupy their places,—and, though oft
Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimm'd by haze,
Are not to be extinguish'd or impair'd.

"Two passions, both degenerate, for they both
Began in honour, gradually obtain'd
Rule over her, and vex'd her daily life;
An unrelenting, avaricious thrift,
And a strange thraldom of maternal love,
That held her spirit in its own despite,
Bound by vexation, and regret, and scorn.
Constrain'd forgiveness, and relenting vows,
And tears, in pride suppress'd, in shame conceal'd,
To a poor dissolute son, her only child.
Her wedded days had open'd with mishap,
Whence dire dependence. What could she perform
To shake the burthen off? Ah! there she felt
Indignantly the weakness of her sex,
Th' injustice of her low estate. She mused;
Resolved; adhered to her resolve; her heart
Closed by degrees to charity; and, thence
Expecting not Heaven's blessing, placed her trust

In ceaseless pains and parsimonious care,
Which got and sternly hoarded each day's gain.

"Thus all was re-established, and a pile
Constructed that sufficed for every end,
Save the contentment of the builder's mind;
A mind by nature indisposed to aught
So placid, so inactive, as content;
A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
And cherishing the pang which it deplored.
Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
To the agitation of a brook that runs
Down rocky mountains—buried now and lost
In silent pools, unfathomably deep;—
Now, in a moment, starting forth again
With violence, and proud of its escape;
Until it sink once more, by slow degrees,
Or instantly, into as dark repose.

"A sudden illness seized her in the strength
Of life's autumnal season. Shall I tell
How on her bed of death the matron lay,
To Providence submissive, so she thought;
But fretted, vex'd, and wrought upon—almost
To anger, by the malady that griped
Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,
As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb.
She pray'd, she moan'd—her husband's sister watch'd
Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs;
And yet the very sound of that kind foot
Was anguish to her ears! 'And must she rule,'
Thus was the dying woman heard to say
In bitterness, 'and must she rule and reign,
Sole mistress of this house, when I am gone?
Sit by my fire—possess what I possess'd—
Tend what I tended, calling it her own!'
Enough—I fear, too much. Of nobler feeling
Take this example. One autumnal eve,
While she was yet in prime of health and strength,
I well remember, while I pass'd her door,
Musing with loitering step, and upward eye
Turn'd tow'rds the planet Jupiter, that hung
Above the centre of the vale, a voice
Roused me—her voice; it said, 'That glorious star
In its untroubled element, will shine
As now it shines, when we are laid in earth
And safe from all our sorrows.' She is safe,
And her uncharitable acts, I trust,
And harsh unkindnesses, are all forgiven,
Though in this vale remember'd with deep awe!"

The Vicar paused; and tow'rds a seat advanced,
A long stone seat, framed in the churchyard wall;
Part under shady sycamore, and part
Offering a place of rest, in pleasant sunshine,
Even as may suit the comers, old or young,
Who seek the house of worship, where the bells
Yet ring with all their voices, or before
The last hath ceased its solitary knell.
To this commodious resting-place he led;
Where, by his side, we all sate down; and there
His office, uninvited, he resumed:—

"As, on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
Screen'd by its parent, so that little mound
Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap
Speaks for itself; an infant there doth rest,
The sheltering hillock is the mother's grave.
If mild discourse, and manners that conferr'd
A natural dignity on humblest rank;
If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks,
That for a face not beautiful did more
Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
And if religious tenderness of heart,
Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
Shed when the clouds had gather'd and disstain'd
The spotless ether of a maiden life;
If these may make a hallow'd spot of earth
More holy in the sight of God or man;
Then, on that mould, a sanctity shall brood
Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

"Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
Could field or grove, or any spot of earth,
Shew to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witness'd—render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod!
There, by her innocent baby's precious grave,
Yea, doubtless on the turf that roofs her own,
The mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel
In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.
Now she is not; the swelling turf reports
Of the fresh flower, but of poor Ellen's tears
Is silent; nor is any vestige left
Upon the pathway, of her mournful tread;
Nor of that peace with which she once had moved
In virgin fearlessness, a step that seem'd
Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
Upon the mountains wet with morning dew,
In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.

Serious and thoughtful was her mind; and yet,
By reconcilement exquisite and rare,
The form, port, motions of this cottage girl
Were such as might have quicken'd and inspired
A Titian's hand, address'd to picture forth
Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade
When first the hunter's startling horn is heard
Upon the golden hills. A spreading elm
Stands in our valley, call'd 'the Joyful Tree;'
An elm distinguish'd by that festive name,
From dateless usage which our peasants hold
Of giving welcome to the first of May
By dances round its trunk. And if the sky
Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid
To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay sports,
If not in beauty, yet in sprightly air,
Was hapless Ellen. No one touch'd the ground
So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks
Less gracefully were braided; but this praise,
Methinks, would better suit another place.

"She loved, and fondly deem'd herself beloved.
The road is dim, the current unperceived.
The weakness painful and most pitiful,
By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,
May be deliver'd to distress and shame.
Such fate was hers. The last time Ellen danced
Among her equals round 'the Joyful Tree,'
She bore a secret burthen: and full soon
Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
Alone, within her widow'd mother's house.
It was the season sweet of budding leaves,
Of days advancing tow'rds their utmost length,
And small birds singing to their happy mates.
Wild is the music of the autumnal wind
Among the faded woods; but these blithe notes
Strike the deserted to the heart: I speak
Of what I know, and what we feel within.
Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening, from that naked perch,
While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
'Ah! why,' said Ellen, sighing to herself,
'Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge,

And nature that is kind in woman's breast,
And reason that in man is wise and good,
And fear of Him who is a righteous judge;
Why do not these prevail for human life,
To keep two hearts together that began
Their spring-time with one love, and that have need
Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
To grant, or be received, while that poor bird
Oh, come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly creature,
One of God's simple children that yet know not
The universal Parent, how he sings
As if he wish'd the firmament of heaven
Should listen, and give back to him the voice
Of his triumphant constancy and love;
The proclamation that he makes, how far
His darkness doth transcend our fickle light!'

"Such was the tender passage, not by me
Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
Which I perused, even as the words had been
Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand
To the blank margin of a valentine,
Bedropp'd with tears. 'Twill please you to be told
That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
Of all companionship, the sufferer yet
In lonely reading found a meek resource.
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
And their long twilight!—friendly to that stealth
With which she slipp'd into the cottage barn.
And found a secret oratory there;
Or, in the garden, pored upon her book
By the last lingering help of open sky,
Till the dark night dismiss'd her to her bed.
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despised love.

"A kindlier passion open'd on her soul
When that poor child was born. Upon its face
She look'd as on a pure and spotless gift
Of unexpected promise, where a grief
Or dread was all that had been thought of—joy
Far sweeter than bewilder'd traveller feels
Upon a perilous waste, where all night long
Through darkness he hath toil'd and fearful storm,
When he beholds the first pale speck serene
Of day-spring in the gloomy east reveal'd,
And greets it with thanksgiving. 'Till this hour,'
Thus in her mother's hearing Ellen spake,
'There was a stony region in my heart;

But He, at whose command the parchèd rock
Was smitten, and pour'd forth a quenching stream,
Hath soften'd that obduracy, and made
Unlook'd-for gladness in the desert place,
To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I look
Upon the light with cheerfulness, for thee
My infant! and for that good mother dear,
Who bore me, and hath pray'd for me in vain;
Yet not in vain,—it shall not be in vain.'
She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfill'd,
And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
They stay'd not long. The blameless infant grew;
The child whom Ellen and her mother loved
They soon were proud of; tended it and nursed,
A soothing comforter, although forlorn:
Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands;
Or a choice shrub, which he who passes by
With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
Fair flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

"Through four months' space the infant drew its food
From the maternal breast: then scruples rose;
Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and cross'd
The sweet affection. She no more could bear
By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget
Their slender means; so, to that parent's care
Trusting her child, she left their common home,
And with contented spirit undertook
A foster-mother's office.

"'Tis, perchance,
Unknown to you that in these simple vales
The natural feeling of equality
Is by domestic service unimpair'd;
Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
From sense of degradation, not the less
The ungentle mind can easily find means
To impose severe restraints and laws unjust:
Which hapless Ellen now was doom'd to feel.

"In selfish blindness, for I will not say
In naked and deliberate cruelty,
The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
Forbad her all communion with her own.
They urged that such meeting would disturb
The mother's mind, distract her thoughts, and thus
Unfit her for her duty; in which dread,
Week after week, the mandate was enforced.
So near! yet not allow'd upon that sight

To fix her eyes—alas! 'twas hard to bear!
But worse affliction must be borne—far worse!
For 'tis Heaven's will, that, after a disease
Begun and ended within three days' space,
Her child should die; as Ellen now exclaim'd
Her own, deserted child! Once, only once,
She saw it in that mortal malady:
And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
Permission to attend its obsequies.
She reach'd the house—last of the funeral train;
And some one, as she enter'd, having chanced
To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure,
'Nay,' said she, with commanding look, a spirit
Of anger never seen in her before,
'Nay, ye must wait my time!' and down she sate,
And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat,
Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping
Upon the last sweet slumber of her child,
Until at length her soul was satisfied.

"You see the infant's grave; and to this spot
The mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
And whatsoe'er the errand, urged her steps;
Hither she came; and here she stood, or knelt
In the broad day—a rueful Magdalene!
So call her; for not only she bewail'd
A mother's loss, but mourn'd in bitterness
Her own transgression; penitent sincere
As ever raised to Heaven a streaming eye.
At length the parents of the foster-child,
Noting that in despite of their commands,
She still renew'd, and could not but renew,
Those visitations, ceased to send her forth;
Or, to the garden's narrow bounds confined.
I fail'd not to remind them that they err'd;
For holy Nature might not thus be cross'd,
Thus wrong'd in woman's breast: in vain I pleaded:
But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapp'd,
And the flower droop'd; as every one could see,
It hung its head in mortal languishment.
Aided by this appearance, I at length
Prevail'd; and, from those bonds released, she went
Home to her mother's house. The youth was fled;
The rash betrayer could not face the shame
Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused;
And little would his presence, or proof given
Of a relenting soul, have now avail'd;
For, like a shadow, he was pass'd away
From Ellen's thoughts; had perish'd to her mind

For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
Save only those which to their common shame,
And to his moral being, appertain'd.
Hope from that quarter would, I know, have brought
A heavenly comfort: there she recognised
An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need;
There, and, as seem'd, there only. She had raised,
Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
In blindness all too near the river's edge;
That work a summer flood with hasty swell
Had swept away, and now her spirit long'd
For its last flight to heaven's security.
The bodily frame was wasted day by day;
Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
Her mind she strictly tutor'd to find peace
And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
And much she read, and brooded feelingly,
Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
As to a spiritual comforter and friend,
Her heart she open'd, and no pains were spared
To mitigate, as gently as I could,
The sting of self-reproach with healing words.
Meek saint—through patience glorified on earth!
In whom, as by her lonely hearth she sat,
The ghastly face of cold decay put on
A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine!
May I not mention, that, within these walls,
In due observance of her pious wish,
The congregation join'd with me in prayer
For her soul's good? Nor was that office vain.
Much did she suffer; but if any friend,
Beholding her condition, at the sight
Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
She still'd them with a prompt reproof, and said:
'He who afflicts me knows what I can bear,
And when I fail, and can endure no more,
Will mercifully take me to Himself.'
So, through the cloud of death her spirit pass'd
Into that pure and unknown world of love
Where injury cannot come: and here is laid
The mortal body by her infant's side."

The Vicar ceased, and downcast looks made known
That each had listen'd with his inmost heart.
For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
Or less benign than that which I had felt
When, seated by my venerable friend,
Beneath those shady elms, from him I heard
The story that retraced the slow decline

Of Margaret sinking on the lonely heath,
With the neglected house in which she dwelt.
I noted that the Solitary's cheek
Confess'd the power of nature. Pleased, though sad,
More pleased than sad, the gray-hair'd Wand'rer sate,
Thanks to his pure imaginative soul,
Capacious and serene; his blameless life,
His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love
Of human kind! He was it who first broke
The pensive silence, saying, "Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
Than to do wrong, although themselves have err'd.
This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
With such in their affliction. Ellen's fate,
Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,
Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
Of one who died within this vale, by doom
Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.
Where, sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones
Of Wilfred Armathwaite?"

The Vicar answer'd:—
"In that green nook, close by the churchyard wall,
Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
In memory and for warning, and in sign
Of sweetness, where dire anguish had been known,
Of reconcilement after deep offence,
There doth he lie. In this, his native vale,
He own'd and till'd a little plot of land;
Here, with his consort and his children saw,
Days that were seldom cross'd by petty strife,
Years safe from large misfortune; and maintain'd
That course which minds, of insight not too keen,
Might look on with entire complacency.
Yet, in himself and near him, there were faults
At work to undermine his happy state
By sure, though tardy, progress. Active, prompt,
And lively was the housewife; in the vale
None more industrious; but her industry,
Ill-judged, full oft, and specious, tended more
To splendid neatness, to a showy, trim,
And overlabour'd purity of house,
Than to substantial thrift. He, on his part,
Generous and easy-minded, was not free
From carelessness; and thus, in lapse of time,
These joint infirmities induced decay
Of wordly substance; and distress of mind,
That to a thoughtful man was hard to shun,
And which he could not cure. A blooming girl

Served in the house, a favourite that had grown
Beneath his eye, encouraged by his care.
Poor now in tranquil pleasure, he gave way
To thoughts of troubled pleasure; he became
A lawless suitor to the maid; and she
Yielded unworthily. Unhappy man!
That which he had been weak enough to do
Was misery in remembrance; he was stung,
Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles
Of wife and children stung to agony.
Wretched at home, he gain'd no peace abroad;
Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
Ask'd comfort of the open air, and found
No quiet in the darkness of the night,
No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
His flock he slighted; his paternal fields
Became a clog to him, whose spirit wish'd
To fly—but whither? And this gracious church,
That wears a look so full of peace and hope
And love, benignant mother of the vale,
How fair amid her brood of cottages!
She was to him a sickness and reproach.
Much to the last remain'd unknown; but this
Is sure, that through remorse and grief he died;
Though pitied among men, absolved by God,
He could not find forgiveness in himself;
Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

"Here rests a mother. But from her I turn,
And from her grave. Behold—upon that ridge,
Which, stretching boldly from the mountain-side,
Carries into the centre of the vale
Its rocks and woods—the cottage where she dwelt;
And where yet dwells her faithful partner, left
(Full eight years past) the solitary prop
Of many helpless children. I begin
With words which might be prelude to a tale
Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel
No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
See daily in that happy family.
Bright garland form they for the pensive brow
Of their undrooping father's widowhood.
Those six fair daughters, budding yet—not one,
Not one of all the band, a full-blown flower.
Depress'd and desolate of soul, as once
That father was, and fill'd with anxious fear,
Now by experience taught, he stands assured,
That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
Of what He seems to take; or gives it back,

Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer;
He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
Which our endeavours have refused to till,
And hope hath never water'd. The abode
Whose grateful owner can attest these truths,
Even were the object nearer to our sight,
Would seem in no distinction to surpass
The rudest habitations. Ye might think
That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or grown
Out of the living rock, to be adorn'd
By nature only; but, if thither led,
Ye would discover, then, a studious work
Of many fancies prompting many hands.
Brought from the woods, the honeysuckle twines
Around the porch, and seems, in that trim place
A plant no longer wild; the cultured rose
There blooms, strong in health, and will be soon
Roof-high; the wild pink crowns the garden wall,
And with the flowers are intermingled stones
Sparry and bright, the scatterings of the hills.
These ornaments that fade not with the year,
A hardy girl continues to provide;
Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
Her father's prompt attendant, does for him
All that a boy could do—but with delight
More keen, and prouder daring; yet hath she
Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
For her own flowers and favourite herbs—a space
By sacred charter holden, for her use.
These, and whatever else the garden bears
Of fruit or flower, permission ask'd or not,
I freely gather; and my leisure draws
A not unfrequent pastime from the sight
Of the bees murmuring round their shelter'd hives
In that enclosure! while the mountain rill,
That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his voice
To the pure course of human life, which there
Flows on in solitude from year to year.
But at the closing in of night, then most
This dwelling charms me. Cover'd by the gloom,
Then, in my walks, I oftentimes stop short
(Who could refrain?) and feed by stealth my sight
With prospect of the company within,
Laid open through the blazing window;—there
I see the eldest daughter at her wheel
Spinning amain, as if to overtake
The never-halting time; or, in her turn,
Teaching some novice of the sisterhood
That skill in this, or other household work,

Which, from her father's honour'd hand, herself,
While she was yet a little one, had learn'd.
Mild man! he is not gay, but they are gay,
And the whole house seems fill'd with gaiety.
Thrice happy, then, the mother may be deem'd,
The wife, who rests beneath that turf, from which
I turn'd, that ye in mind might witness where
And how her spirit yet survives on earth!

"The next three ridges—those upon the left—
By close connexion with our present thought,
Tempt me to add, in praise of humble worth,
Their brief and unobtrusive history.
One hillock, ye may note, is small and low,
Sunk almost to a level with the plain
By weight of time; the others, undepress'd,
Are bold and swelling. There a husband sleeps,
Deposited, in pious confidence
Of glorious resurrection with the just,
Near the loved partner of his early days;
And, in the bosom of that family mould,
A second wife is gather'd to his side;
The approved assistant of an arduous course
From his mid-noon of manhood to old age!
He also of his mate deprived, was left
Alone—'mid many children; one a babe
Orphan'd as soon as born. Alas! 'tis not
In course of nature that a father's wing
Should warm these little ones; and can he feed?
That was a thought of agony more keen.
For, hand in hand with death, by strange mishap
And chance encounter on their diverse road,
The ghastlier shape of poverty had enter'd
Into that house, unfear'd and unforeseen.
He had stepp'd forth in time of urgent need,
The generous surety of a friend; and now
The widow'd father found that all his rights
In his paternal fields were undermined:
Landless he was and penniless. The dews
Of night and morn, that wet the mountain sides,
The bright stars twinkling on their dusky tops,
Were conscious of the pain that drove him forth
From his own door, he knew not when to range-
He knew not where; distracted was his brain,
His heart was cloven; and full oft he pray'd,
In blind despair, that God would take them all.
But suddenly, as if in one kind moment
To encourage and reprove, a gleam of light
Broke from the very bosom of that cloud

Which darken'd the whole prospect of his days.
For he who now possess'd the joyless right
To force the bondsman from his house and lands,
In pity, and by admiration urged
Of his unmurmuring and considerate mind,
Meekly submissive to the law's decree,
Lighten'd the penalty with liberal hand.
The desolate father raised his head, and look'd
On the wide world in hope. Within these walls,
In course of time was solemnised the vow
Whereby a virtuous woman, of grave years
And of prudential habits, undertook
The sacred office of a wife to him,
Of mother to his helpless family.
Nor did she fail—in nothing did she fail,
Through various exercise of twice ten years,
Save in some partial fondness for that child
Which at the birth she had received, the babe
Whose heart had known no mother but herself.
By mutual efforts, by united hopes,
By daily-growing help of boy and girl,
Train'd early to participate that zeal
Of industry, which runs before the day
And lingers after it; by strong restraint
Of an economy which did not check
The heart's more generous motions tow'rds themselves
Or to their neighbours; and by trust in God,
This pair insensibly subdued the fears
And troubles that beset their life: and thus
Did the good father and his second mate
Redeem at length their plot of smiling fields.
These, at this day, the eldest son retains:
The younger offspring, through the busy world,
Have all been scatter'd wide, by various fates;
But each departed from the native vale,
In beauty flourishing, and moral worth!"

BOOK VII.

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—CONTINUED.

Impression of these narratives upon the author's mind—Pastor invited to give account of certain graves that lie apart—Clergyman and his family—Fortunate influence of change of situation—Activity in extreme old age—Another clergyman, a character of resolute virtue—Lamentations over misdirected applause—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man—Elevated character of a blind man—Reflection upon blindness—Interrupted by a peasant who passes—His animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting trees—A female infant's grave: joy at her birth; sorrow at her departure—A youthful peasant—His patriotic enthusiasm—Distinguished qualities—And untimely death—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this picture—Solitary, how affected—Monument of a knight—Traditions concerning him—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society—Hints at his own past calling—Thanks the Pastor.

While thus from theme to theme the historian pass'd,
The words he utter'd, and the scene that lay
Before our eyes, awaken'd in my mind
Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours,
When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
(What time the splendour of the setting sun
Lay beautiful on Snowdon's craggy top,
On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur,)
A wandering youth, I listen'd with delight
To pastoral melody or warlike air,
Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
By some accomplish'd master; while he sate
Amid the quiet of the green recess,
And there did inexhaustibly dispense
An interchange of soft or solemn tunes,
Tender or blithe; now, as the varying mood
Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
From youth or maiden, or some honour'd chief
Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
Around him, drinking in the impassion'd notes
Of the time-hallow'd minstrelsy) required
For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of power
Were they, to seize and occupy the sense;
But to a higher mark than song can reach
Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the stream
Which overflow'd the soul was pass'd away,
A consciousness remain'd that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be destroy'd.

"These grassy heaps lie amicably close,"

Said I, "like surges heaving in the win
Upon the surface of a mountain pool:
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold
Five graves, and only five, that lie apart,
Unsociable company and sad;
And, furthermore, appearing to encroach
On the smooth playground of the village-school?"

The Vicar answer'd: "No disdainful pride
In them who rest beneath, nor any course
Of strange or tragic accident, hath help'd
To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
Once more look forth, and follow with your eyes
The length of road which from yon mountain's base
Through bare enclosures stretches, till its line
Is lost among a little tuft of trees;
Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
The cultured fields, and up the heathy waste,
Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
Towards an easy outlet of the vale,
That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,
By which the road is hidden, also hides
A cottage from our view; though I discern
(You scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees
The smokeless chimney-top. All unembower'd
And naked stood that lowly parsonage
(For such in truth it is, and appertains
To a small chapel in the vale beyond)
When hither came its last inhabitant.

"Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
By which our northern wilds could then be cross'd;
And into most of these secluded vales
Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
So, at his dwelling-place the priest arrived
With store of household goods, in panniers slung
On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,
And on the back of more ignoble beast,
That, with like burthen of effects most prized
Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
Young was I then, a school-boy of eight years;
But still, methinks, I see them as they pass'd
In order, drawing tow'rds their wish'd-for home,
Rock'd by the motion of a trusty ass
Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
Each in his basket nodding drowsily;
Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,
Which told that 'twas the pleasant month of June;
And, close behind, the comely matron rode,
A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,

And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,
Even from Northumbrian hills; yet theirs had been
A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheer'd
By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest;
And freak put on, and arch word dropp'd, to swell
The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
That gather'd round the slowly-moving train.
'Whence do they come? and with what errand charged?
Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
Who pitch their tents beneath the green-wood tree?
Or are they strollers, furnish'd to enact
Fair Rosamond, and the Children of the Wood,
And, by that whisker'd tabby's aid, set forth
The lucky venture of sage Whittington,
When the next village hears the show announced
By blast of trumpet?' Plenteous was the growth
Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen
On many a staring countenance portray'd
Of boor or burgher, as they march'd along.
And more than once their steadiness of face
Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
To their inventive humour, by stern looks,
And questions in authoritative tone,
From some staid guardian of the public peace,
Checking the sober steed on which he rode,
In his suspicious wisdom; oftener still
By notice indirect, or blunt demand
From traveller halting in his own despite,
A simple curiosity to ease:
Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheer'd
Their grave migration, the good pair would tell,
With undiminish'd glee, in hoary age.

"A priest he was by function; but his course
From his youth up, and high as manhood's noon
(The hour of life to which he then was brought,)
Had been irregular; I might say, wild;
By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care
Too little check'd. An active, ardent mind;
A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme
To cheat the sadness of a rainy day;
Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games;
A generous spirit, and a body strong
To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl;
Had earn'd for him sure welcome, and the rights
Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall
Of country squire; or at the statelier board
Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp

Withdrawn,—to while away the summer hours
In condescension among rural guests.

"With these high comrades he had revell'd long,
Had frolic'd many a year; a simple clerk
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
And vex'd, until the weary heart grew sick;
And so, abandoning each higher aim
And all his showy friends, at length he turn'd
For a life's stay, though slender, yet assured,
To this remote and humble chapelry;
Which had been offer'd to his doubtful choice
By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
They found the cottage, their allotted home:
Naked without, and rude within; a spot
With which the scantily-provided cure
Not long had been endow'd; and far remote
The chapel stood, divided from that house
By an unpeopled tract of mountain waste.
Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
Or the necessity that fix'd him here;
Apart from old temptations, and constrain'd
To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor!
And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
The sick in body, or distress'd in mind;
And, by as salutary change compell'd,
Month after month, in that obscure abode
To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day
With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged,
Or these wild brooks; from which he now return'd
Contentedly to make a temperate meal
At his own board, where sat his gentle mate
And three fair children plentifully fed,
Though simply, from their little household farm;
With acceptable treat of fish or fowl
By nature yielded to his practised hand;—
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
A charitable door. So days and years
Pass'd on;—the inside of that rugged house
Was trimm'd and brighten'd by the matron's care,
And gradually enrich'd with things of price,
Which might be lack'd for use or ornament.

What, though no soft and costly sofa there
Insidiously stretch'd out its lazy length,
And no vain mirror glitter'd on the walls,
Yet were the windows of the low abode
By shutters weather-fended, which at once
Repell'd the storm and deaden'd its loud roar.
There, snow-white curtains hung in decent folds;
Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain plants,
That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
Were nicely braided; and composed a work
Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace
Lay at the threshold and the inner doors;
And a fair carpet, woven of home-spun wool,
But tinctured daintily with florid hues,
For seemliness and warmth, on festive days,
Cover'd the smooth blue slabs of mountain stone
With which the parlour floor, in simplest guise
Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.
These pleasing works the housewife's skill produced:
Meanwhile the unsedentary master's hand
Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
To rear for food, for shelter, and delight;
A thriving covert! And when wishes, form'd
In youth, and sanction'd by the riper mind,
Restored me to my native valley, here
To end my days; well pleased was I to see
The once bare cottage, on the mountain side,
Screen'd from assault of every bitter blast;
While the dark shadows of the summer leaves
Danced in the breeze, upon its mossy roof.
Time, which had thus afforded willing help
To beautify with Nature's fairest growth
This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
Upon its master's frame a wintry grace;
The comeliness of unenfeebled age.
But how could I say, gently? for he still
Retain'd a flashing eye, a burning palm,
A stirring foot, and head which beat at nights
Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
Few likings had he dropp'd, few pleasures lost;
Generous and charitable, prompt to serve;
And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
Anger and indignation. Still he loved
The sound of titled names, and talk'd in glee
Of long-past banquetings with high-born friends:
Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight
Uproused by recollected injury, rail'd
At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
In bitterness, and with a threatening eye

Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
These transports, with staid looks of pure good-will,
And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
She, far behind him in the race of years,
Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
To that still region whither all are bound.
Him might we liken to the setting sun
As I have seen it on some gusty day
Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
With an inconstant and unmellow'd light;
She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
As if with wish to veil the restless orb,
From which it did itself imbibe a ray
Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this;
I better love to sprinkle on the sod
Which now divides the pair, or rather say
Which still unites them, praises, like heaven's dew,
Without distinction, falling upon both.
Yoke-fellows were they long and well approved
To endure and to perform.
"With frugal pains,
Yet in a course of generous discipline,
Did this poor churchman and his consort rear
Their progeny. Of three—sent forth to try
The paths of fortune in the open world,
One, not endow'd with firmness to resist
The suit of pleasure, to his native vale
Return'd and humbly till'd his father's glebe.
The youngest daughter, too, in duty stay'd
To lighten her declining mother's care.
But, ere the bloom was pass'd away which health
Preserved to adorn a cheek no longer young,
Her heart, in course of nature, finding place
For new affections, to the holy state
Of wedlock they conducted her; but still
The bride adhering to those filial cares,
Dwelt with her mate beneath her father's roof.

"Our very first in eminence of years
This old man stood, the patriarch of the vale!
And, to his unmolested mansion, death
Had never come through space of forty years;
Sparing both old and young in that abode.
Suddenly then they disappear'd: not twice
Had summer scorch'd the fields; not twice had fallen,
On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
Before the greedy visiting was closed,
And the long-privileged house left empty—swept

As by a plague: yet no rapacious plague
Had been among them; all was gentle death,
One after one, with intervals of peace.
A happy consummation! an accord
Sweet, perfect, to be wish'd for! save that here
Was something which to mortal sense might sound
Like harshness,—that the old gray-headed sire,
The oldest, he was taken last, survived
When the meek partner of his age, his son,
His daughter, and that late and high-prized gift,
His little smiling grandchild, were no more.

"All gone, all vanish'd! he deprived and bare,
How will he face the remnant of his life?
What will become of him?' we said, and mused
In sad conjectures—'Shall we meet him now
Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?
Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
Striving to entertain the lonely hours
With music?' (for he had not ceased to touch
The harp or viol which himself had framed,
For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
'What titles will he keep? will he remain
Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
A planter and a rearer from the seed?
A man of hope and forward-looking mind
Even to the last!'—Such was he, unsubdued.
But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,
And this survivor, with his cheerful throng
Of open schemes, and all his inward hoard
Of unsunn'd griefs, too many and too keen,
Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
For noontide solace on the summer grass,
The warm lap of his mother earth: and so,
Their lenient term of separation past,
That family (whose graves you there behold)
By yet a higher privilege once more
Were gather'd to each other."

Calm of mind
And silence waited on these closing words;
Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
Lest in these passages of life were some
That might have touch'd the sick heart of his friend
Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
His own firm spirit in degree depress'd
By tender sorrow for our mortal state)

Thus silence broke:—"Behold a thoughtless man
From vice and premature decay preserved
By useful habits, to a fitter soil
Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
In the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
With each repeating its allotted prayer,
And thus divides and thus relieves the time;
Smooth task, with his compared, whose mind could string,
Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
Of keen domestic anguish; and beguile
A solitude, unchosen, unprofess'd,
Till gentlest death released him. Far from us
Be the desire—too curiously to ask
How much of this is but the blind result
Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
And what to higher powers is justly due.
But you, sir, know that in a neighbouring vale
A priest abides before whose life such doubts
Fall to the ground; whose gifts of nature lie
Retired from notice, lost in attributes
Of reason, honourably effaced by debts
Which her poor treasure-house is content to owe,
And conquests over her dominion gain'd,
To which her forwardness must needs submit.
In this one man is shewn a temperance, proof
Against all trials; industry severe
And constant as the motion of the day;
Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
That might be deem'd forbidding, did not there
All generous feelings flourish and rejoice;
Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
And resolution competent to take
Out of the bosom of simplicity
All that her holy customs recommend,
And the best ages of the world prescribe.
Preaching, administering, in every work
Of his sublime vocation, in the walks
Of worldly intercourse 'twixt man and man,
And in his humble dwelling, he appears
A labourer, with moral virtue girt,
With spiritual graces, like a glory, crown'd."

"Doubt can be none," the Pastor said, "for whom
This portraiture is sketch'd. The great, the good,
The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
Honour assumed or given · and him the 'Wonderful,'
Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
Deservedly have styled.—From his abode

In a dependent chapelry, that lies
Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,
Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,—
And, having once espoused, would never quit;
Hither, ere long, that lowly, great, good man
Will be convey'd. An unelaborate stone
May cover him; and by its help, perchance,
A century shall hear his name pronounced,
With images attendant on the sound;
Then shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
In utter night; and of his course remain
No cognizable vestiges, no more
Than of this breath, which frames itself in words
To speak of him, and instantly dissolves.
Noise is there not enough in doleful war,
But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,
To multiply and aggravate the din?
Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
And, in requited passion, all too much
Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—
But that the minstrel of the rural shade
Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse
The perturbation in the suffering breast,
And propagate its kind, where'er he may?
Ah who (and with such rapture as befits
The hallow'd theme) will rise and celebrate
The good man's deeds and purposes; retrace
His struggles, his discomfiture deplore,
His triumphs hail, and glorify his end?
That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds
Through fancy's heat redounding in the brain,
And like the soft infections of the heart,
By charm of measured words may spread through fields
And cottages; and piety survive
Upon the lips of men in hall or bower;
Not for reproof, but high and warm delight,
And grave encouragement, by song inspired.
Vain thought! but wherefore murmur or repine?
The memory of the just survives in heaven:
And, without sorrow, will this ground receive
That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best
Of what it holds confines us to degrees
In excellence less difficult to reach,
And milder worth: nor need we travel far
From those to whom our last regards were paid,
For such example.

Almost at the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare

And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches tow'rds me, like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the green-sward; there beneath
A plain blue stone, a gentle dalesman lies,
From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul;
And this deep mountain valley was to him
Soundless, with all its streams. The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this cottager from sleep
With startling summons; nor for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
Murmur'd the labouring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture: evermore
Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved;
Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side
Ascended with his staff and faithful dog;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he sway'd;
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not; neither flock nor field he own'd;
No wish for wealth had place within his mind;
Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or care.
Though born a younger brother, need was none
That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart, to plant himself anew.
And when, mature in manhood, he beheld
His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him; but he remain'd well pleased,
By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family,
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
That press'd upon his brother's house, for books
Were ready comrades whom he could not tire,
Of whose society the blameless man
Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
Even to old age, with unabated charm
Beguiled his leisure hours, refresh'd his thoughts:
Beyond its natural elevation raised

His introverted spirit, and bestow'd
Upon his life an outward dignity
Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,
The stormy day, had each its own resource;
Song of the muses, sage historic tale,
Science severe, or word of Holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of the just,
From imperfection and decay secure.
Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint:
And they, who were about him, did not fail
In reverence, or in courtesy; they prized
His gentle manners; and his peaceful smiles,
The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
Were met with answering sympathy and love.

"At length, when sixty years and five were told,
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature; and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
Heart-sorrow render'd sweet by gratitude.
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.
And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
Was wasted on the good man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;
And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

"Soul-cheering light, most bountiful of things!
Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven,
We all too thanklessly participate,
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch.
Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complain'd;
Ask of the channell'd rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined course.
What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, who cannot see, advancing
Towards some precipice's airy brink!

But, timely warn'd, *he* would have stay'd his steps;
Protected, say enlighten'd, by his ear,
And on the very brink of vacancy
Not more endanger'd than a man whose eye
Beholds the gulf beneath. No flow'ret blooms
Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
Or in the woods, that could from him conceal
Its birthplace; none whose figure did not live
Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth
Enrich'd with knowledge his industrious mind;
The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
Lodged in her bosom; and by science led,
His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
Methinks I see him; how his eyeballs roll'd
Beneath his ample brow, in darkness pair'd,—
But each instinct with spirit; and the frame
Of the whole countenance alive with thought,
Fancy, and understanding; while the voice
Discoursed of natural and moral truth
With eloquence, and such authentic power,
That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
Abash'd, and tender pity overawed."

"A noble, and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle," the Wanderer said,
"Beings like these present! But proofs abound
Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguish'd, do not, *therefore,* cease to be.
And to the mind among her powers of sense
This transfer is permitted,—not alone
That the bereft may win their recompence;
But for remoter purposes of love
And charity; not last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth,
How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banish'd from the realms of death,
By man's imperishable spirit quell'd.
Unto the men who see not as we see,
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.
And know we not that from the blind have flow'd
The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre;
And wisdom married to immortal verse?"

Among the humbler worthies, at our feet
Lying insensible to human praise,
Love, or regret—*whose* lineaments would next
Have been portray'd, I guess not; but it chanced
That near the quiet churchyard where we sate,

A team of horses, with a pond'rous freight
Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
Came at that moment, ringing noisily.

"Here," said the Pastor, "do we muse, and mourn
The waste of death; and lo! the giant oak
Stretch'd on his bier!—that massy timber-wain;
Nor fail to note the man who guides the team."

He was a peasant of the lowest class:
Gray locks profusely round his temples hung
In clust'ring curls, like ivy, which the bite
Of winter cannot thin; the fresh air lodged
Within his cheek, as light within a cloud;
And he return'd our greeting with a smile.
When he had pass'd, the Solitary spake:
"A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows; with a face
Not worldly-minded; for it bears too much
Of Nature's impress,—gaiety and health,
Freedom and hope; but keen, withal, and shrewd.
His gestures note,—and hark! his tones of voice
Are all vivacious as his mien and looks."

The Pastor answer'd:—"You have read him well.
Year after year is added to his store
With *silent* increase: summers, winters—past,
Past or to come; yea, boldly might I say,
Ten summers and ten winters of the space
That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix
The obligation of an anxious mind,
A pride in having, or a fear to lose;
Possess'd like outskirts of some large domain,
By any one more thought of than by him
Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord!
Yet is the creature rational—endow'd
With foresight; hears, too, every Sabbath-day,
The Christian promise with attentive ear,
Nor disbelieves the tidings which he hears.
Meanwhile the incense, offer'd up by him
Is of the kind which beasts and birds present
In grove or pasture; cheerfulness of soul,
From trepidation and repining free.
How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
Upon their knees, and daily homage pay
Less worthy, less religious even, than his!

"This qualified respect, the old man's due,
Is paid without reluctance: but, in truth,"

Said the good Vicar with a fond half smile,
"I feel at times a motion of despite
Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
In works of havoc; taking from these vales,
One after one, their proudest ornaments.
Full oft his doings leave me to deplore
Tall ash-tree sown by winds, by vapours nursed,
In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks;
Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
Transparent texture, framing in the east
A veil of glory for the ascending moon;
And oak whose roots by noontide dew were damp'd,
And on whose forehead inaccessible
The raven lodged in safety. Many a ship
Launch'd into Morecamb Bay, hath owed to him
Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast that bears
The loftiest of her pendants. Help he gives
To lordly mansion rising far or near;
The enormous wheel that turns ten thousand spindles,
And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
Content with meaner prowess, must have lack'd
The trunk and body of their marvellous strength,
If his undaunted enterprise had fail'd
Among the mountain coves, or keen research
In forest, park, or chase. Yon household fir,
A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
But towering high the roof above, as if
Its humble destination were forgot;
That sycamore, which annually holds
Within its shade, as in a stately tent
On all sides open to the fanning breeze,
A grave assemblage, seated while they shear
The fleece-encumber'd flock—the 'Joyful Elm,'
Around whose trunk the lasses dance in May,
And the 'Lord's Oak' would plead their several rights
In vain, if he were master of their fate.
Not one would have his pitiful regard,
For prized accommodation, pleasant use,
For dignity, for old acquaintance' sake,
For ancient custom or distinguish'd name.
His sentence to the axe would doom them all.
But green in age and lusty as he is,
And promising to stand from year to year,
Less, as might seem, in rivalship with men
Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
His own appointed hour will come at last;
And, like the haughty spoilers of the world,
This keen destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

"Now from the living, pass we once again;
From age," the Priest continued, "turn your thoughts;—
From age, that often unlamented drops,
And mark that daisied hillock, three spans long.
Seven lusty sons sate daily round the board
Of Gold-rill side; and when the hope had ceased
Of other progeny, a daughter then
Was given, the crowning glory of the whole!
Welcomed with joy, whose penetrating power
Was not unfelt amid that heavenly calm
With which by nature every mother's soul
Is stricken, in the moment when her throes
Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
Which tells her that a living child is born,
And she lies conscious in a blissful rest,
That the dread storm is weather'd by them both.

"The father—him at this unlook'd-for gift
A bolder transport seizes. From the side
Of his bright hearth, and from his open door,
And from the laurel-shaded seat thereby,
Day after day the gladness is diffused
To all that come, and almost all that pass;
Invited, summon'd, to partake the cheer
Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
Health and good wishes to his new-born girl,
From cups replenish'd by his joyous hand.
Those seven fair brothers variously were moved
Each by the thoughts best suited to his years:
But most of all, and with most thankful mind,
The hoary grandsire felt himself enrich'd;
A happiness that ebb'd not, but remain'd
To fill the total measure of the soul!
From the low tenement, his own abode,
Whither, as to a little private cell,
He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and noise,
To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
Once every day he duteously repair'd
To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe:
For in that female infant's name he heard
The silent name of his departed wife;
Heart-stirring music! hourly heard that name;
Full blest he was, 'Another Margaret Green,'
Oft did he say, 'was come to Gold-rill side.'

"Oh! pang unthought of, as the precious boon
Itself had been unlook'd-for:—oh! dire stroke
Of desolating anguish for them all!
Just as the child could totter on the floor,
And by some friendly finger's help upstay'd,

Range round the garden-walk, whose low ground flowers
Were peeping forth, shy messengers of spring,—
Even at that hopeful time,—the winds of March,
One sunny day, smiting insiduously,
Raised in the tender passage of the throat
Viewless obstruction; whence, all unforewarn'd,
The household lost their hope and soul's delight.
But Providence, that gives and takes away
By His own law, is merciful and just;
Time wants not power to soften all regrets,
And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress
Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears
Fail not to spring from either parent's eye
Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
Yet this departed little one, too long
The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
In what may now be call'd a peaceful grave.

"On a bright day, the brightest of the year,
These mountains echo'd with an unknown sound,
A volley, thrice repeated o'er the corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave,
Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould.
Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth!
Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these sods,
That they may knit together, and therewith
Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness!
Nor so the valley shall forget her loss.
Dear youth, by young and old alike beloved,
To me as precious as my own!—Green herbs
May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
Over thy last abode, and we may pass
Reminded less imperiously of thee:
The ridge itself may sink into the breast
Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more;
Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our hearts
Thy image disappear. The mountain-ash,
Deck'd with autumnal berries that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms, yields a splendid show,
Amid the leafy woods; and ye have seen
By a brook-side, or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn,—the pool
Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brighten'd round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did this youth appear;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which Nature's hand

Had bounteously array'd him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
Pan or Apollo, veil'd in human form;
Yet, like the sweet-breath'd violet of the shade,
Discover'd in their own despite to sense
Of mortals, (if such fables without blame
May find chance mention on this sacred ground,)
So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him reveal'd a scholar's genius shone;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walk'd
Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit
Whizz'd from the stripling's arm! If touch'd by him,
The inglorious football mounted to the pitch
Of the lark's flight, or shaped a rainbow curve,
Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field!
The indefatigable fox had learn'd
To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration he could lift his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loath to assault the majesty he loved;
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The sailing glead,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe,
The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious water-fowl, from distant climes,
Fix'd at their seat,—the centre of the mere,
Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim.

"From Gallia's coast a tyrant's threats were hurl'd;
Our country mark'd the preparations vast
Of hostile forces; and she call'd—with voice
That fill'd her plains, and reach'd her utmost shores,
And in remotest vales was heard—To arms!
Then, for the first time, here you might have seen
The shepherd's gray to martial scarlet changed,
That flash'd uncouthly through the woods and fields.
Ten hardy striplings, all in bright attire,
And graced with shining weapons, weekly march'd
From this lone valley to a central spot,
Where, in assemblage with the flower and choice
Of the surrounding district, they might learn
The rudiments of war; ten—hardy, strong,
And valiant; but young Oswald, like a chief,
And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
From their shy solitude, to face the world,
With a gay confidence and seemly pride:
Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet

Like youths released from labour, and yet bound
To most laborious service, though to them
A festival of unencumber'd ease;
The inner spirit keeping holiday,
Like vernal ground to Sabbath sunshine left.

"Oft have I mark'd him, at some leisure hour,
Stretch'd on the grass or seated in the shade
Among his fellows, while an ample map
Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,
From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
Now pointing this way and now that.—'Here flows,'
Thus would he say, 'the Rhine, that famous stream!
Eastward, the Danube, tow'rds this inland sea,
A mightier river, winds from realm to realm;
And, like a serpent, shews his glittering back
Bespotted with innumerable isles.
Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk; observe
His capital city!' Thence, along a tract
Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears
His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely raged:
Nor left unstigmatised those fatal fields
On which the sons of mighty Germany
Were taught a base submission. 'Here behold
A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
And mountains white with everlasting snow!'
And surely he that spake with kindling brow,
Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
Of that young peasantry who, in our days,
Have fought and perish'd for Helvetia's rights,
Ah, not in vain!—or those who, in old time,
For work of happier issue, to the side
Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts,
When he had risen alone! No braver youth
Descended from Judea's heights, to march
With righteous Joshua; or appear'd in arms
When grove was fell'd, and altar was cast down,
And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed,
And strong in hatred of idolatry."

This spoken, from his seat the Pastor rose,
And moved towards the grave. Instinctively
His steps we follow'd; and my voice exclaim'd,
"Power to the oppressors of the world is given,
A might of which they dream not. Oh! the curse.
To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,
Father and founder of exalted deeds;
And, to whole nations bound in servile straits

The liberal donor of capacities
More than heroic! this to be, nor yet
Have sense of one connatural wish, nor yet
Deserve the least return of human thanks;
Winning no recompence but deadly hate
With pity mix'd—astonishment with scorn!"

When these involuntary words had ceased,
The Pastor said: "So Providence is served;
The forkèd weapon of the skies can send
Illumination into deep, dark holds,
Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to pierce.
Why do ye quake, intimidated thrones?
For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes,
Europe, through all her habitable seats,
Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who still
Exist, as pagan temples stood of old,
By very horror of their impious rites
Preserved—are suffer'd to extend their pride,
Like cedars on the top of Lebanon
Darkening the sun. But less impatient thoughts,
And love 'all hoping, and expecting all,'
This hallow'd grave demands, where rests in peace
A humble champion of the better cause;
A peasant youth—so call him, for he ask'd
No higher name; in whom our country shew'd,
As in a favourite son, most beautiful.
In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts
England, the ancient and the free, appear'd
In him to stand before my swimming eyes
Unconquerably virtuous and secure.
No more of this, lest I offend his dust;
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

"One summer's day, a day of annual pomp
And solemn chase, from morn to sultry noon
His steps had follow'd, fleetest of the fleet,
The red-deer driven along its native heights
With cry of hound and horn; and from that toil
Return'd with sinews weaken'd and relax'd,
This generous youth, too negligent of self,
(A natural failing which maturer years
Would have subdued,) took fearlessly—and kept—
His wonted station in the chilling flood,
Among a busy company convened
To wash his father's flock. Convulsions dire
Seized him, that self-same night; and through the space
Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrench'd,

Till Nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatch'd away, his comrades paid
A soldier's honours. At his funeral hour
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue,—
A golden lustre slept upon the hills:
And if by chance a stranger, wand'ring there,
From some commanding eminence had look'd
Down on this spot, well pleased would he have seen
A glittering spectacle; but every face
Was pallid; seldom hath that eye been moist
With tears that wept not then; nor were the few,
Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
In this sad service, less disturb'd than we.
They started at the tributary peal
Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,
Through the still air, the closing of the grave,
And distant mountains echo'd with a sound
Of lamentation never heard before!"

The Pastor ceased. My venerable friend
Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye,
And, when that eulogy was ended, stood
Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
The prolongation of some still response,
Sent by the ancient soul of this wide land—
The spirit of its mountains and its seas,
Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
Descending and supporting his pure heart
With patriotic confidence and joy.
And, at the last of those memorial words,
The pining Solitary turn'd aside;
Whether through manly instinct to conceal
Tender emotions spreading from the heart
To his worn cheek; or with uneasy shame
For those cold humours of habitual spleen,
Which, fondly seeking in dispraise of man,
Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes urged
To self-abuse a not ineloquent tongue.
Right tow'rds the sacred edifice his steps
Had been directed; and we saw him now
Intent upon a monumental stone,
Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
Or rather seem'd to have grown into the side
Of the rude pile; as ofttimes trunks of trees,
Where Nature works in wild and craggy spots,
Are seen incorporate with the living rock;
To indure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
Of his employment, with a courteous smile,

Exclaim'd, "The sagest antiquary's eye
That task would foil." And with these added words,
He thitherward advanced: "Traditi on tells
That, in Eliza's golden days, a knight
Came on a war-horse sumptuously attired,
And fixed his home in this sequester'd vale.
'Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
Or as a stranger reach'd this deep recess,
Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing thought
I sometimes entertain, that, haply bound
To Scotland's court in service of his queen,
Or sent on mission to some northern chief
Of England's realm, this vale he might have seen
With transient observation; and thence caught
An image fair, which, bright'ning in his soul
When years admonish'd him of failing strength,
And he no more rejoiced in war's delights,
Had power to draw him from the world,—resolved
To make that paradise his chosen home,
To which his peaceful fancy oft had turn'd.
Vague thoughts are these; but if belief may rest
Upon unwritten story fondly traced
From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
The knight arrived, with pomp of spear and shield,
And borne upon a charger cover'd o'er
With gilded housings. And the lofty steed—
His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
Of admiration and delightful awe,
By those untravell'd dalesmen. With less pride,
Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
Of their rude homesteads. Here the warrior dwelt,
And in that mansion children of his own,
Or kindred, gather'd round him. As a tree
That falls and disappears, the house is gone:
And, through improvidence, or want of love
For ancient worth and honourable things,
The spear and shield are vanish'd, which the knight
Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway, last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace is left
Of the mild-hearted champion, save this stone,
Faithless memorial! and his family name
Borne by yon clustering cottages, that sprang
From out the ruins of his stately lodge;

These, and the name and title at full length,—
Sir Alfred Irthing—with appropriate words
Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,
That in the steeple hang, his pious gift."

"So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,"
The gray-hair'd wanderer pensively exclaim'd,
"All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
The stars of human glory are cast down;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings;
Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and palms
Of all the mighty, wither'd and consumed!
Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
Long to protect her own. The man himself
Departs; and soon is spent the line of those
Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,
Fraternities and orders—heaping high
New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
And placing trust in privilege confirm'd
And re-confirm'd—are scoff'd at with a smile
Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
Of desolation aim'd: to slow decline
These yield, and these to sudden overthrow;
Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
Expire; and Nature's pleasant robe of green,
Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
Their monuments and their memory. The vast frame
Of social nature changes evermore
Her organs and her members, with decay
Restless, and restless generation, powers
And functions dying and produced at need,—
And by this law the mighty whole subsists:
With an ascent and progress in the main;
Yet, oh! how disproportion'd to the hopes
And expectations of self-flattering minds!
The courteous knight whose bones are here interr'd,
Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
For strife and ferment in the minds of men;
Whence alteration, in the forms of things,
Various and vast. A memorable age!
Which did to him assign a pensive lot,
To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds,
That, on the steady breeze of honour, sail'd
In long procession calm and beautiful.
He, who had seen his own bright order fade,

And its devotion gradually decline,
(While War, relinquishing the lance and shield,
Her temper changed, and bow'd to other laws,)
Had also witness'd, in his morn of life,
That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town, and city, and sequester'd glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house—pile after pile;
And shook the tenants out into the fields,
Like wild beasts without home! Their hour was come,
But why no softening thought of gratitude,
No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt?
Benevolence is mild; nor borrows help,
Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force,
Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
But human-kind rejoices in the might
Of mutability, and airy hopes,
Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
Those meditations of the soul which feed
The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
Break from the madden'd nations at the sight
Of sudden overthrow; and cold neglect
Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

"Even," said the Wanderer, "as that courteous knight,
Bound by his vow to labour for redress
Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
By sword and lance the law of gentleness,
If I may venture of myself to speak,
Trusting that not incongruously I blend
Low things with lofty, I too shall be doom'd
To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
Of the poor calling which my youth embraced
With no unworthy prospect. But enough;
Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere seemlier now
To stop, and yield our gracious teacher thanks
For the pathetic records which his voice
Hath here deliver'd: words of heartfelt truth,
Tending to patience when affliction strikes;
To hope and love; to confident repose
In God; and reverence for the dust of man."

BOOK VIII.

THE PARSONAGE.

Pastor's apprehensions that he might have detained his auditors too long—Invitation to his house—Solitary disinclined to comply—Rallies the Wanderer—And somewhat playfully draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the knight-errant—which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the country from the manufacturing spirit—Favourable effects—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth—Gives instances—Physical science unable to support itself—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler classes of society—Picture of a child employed in a cotton-mill—Ignorance and degradation of children among the agricultural population reviewed—Conversation broken off by a renewed invitation from the Pastor—Path leading to his house—Its appearance described—His daughter—His wife—His son (a boy) enters with his companion—Their happy appearance—The Wanderer, how affected by the sight of them.

THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
To those acknowledgments subscribed his own,
With a sedate compliance, which the Priest
Fail'd not to notice, inly pleased, and said:—
"If ye, by whom invited, I commenced
Those narratives of calm and humble life,
Be satisfied, 'tis well,—the end is gain'd;
And, in return for sympathy bestow'd,
And patient listening, thanks accept from me.
Life, death, eternity! momentous themes
Are these—and might demand a seraph's tongue,
Were they not equal to their own support;
And therefore no incompetence of mine
Could do them wrong. The universal forms
Of human nature, in a spot like this,
Present themselves at once to all men's view:
Ye wish'd for act and circumstance, that make
The individual known and understood;
And such as my best judgment could select
From what the place afforded, have been given;
Though apprehensions cross'd me, in the course
Of this self-pleasing exercise, that ye
My zeal to his would liken, who, possess'd
Of some rare gems, or pictures finely wrought,
Unlocks his cabinet, and draws them forth
One after one—soliciting regard
To this, and this, as worthier than the last,
Till the spectator, who a while was pleased
More than th' exhibitor himself, becomes
Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
But let us hence! my dwelling is in sight,
And there"—

At this the Solitary shrunk
With backward will; but, wanting not address
That inward motion to disguise, he said
To his compatriot, smiling as he spake,—
"The peaceable remains of this good knight
Would be disturb'd, I fear, with wrathful scorn,
If consciousness could reach him where he lies
That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
Deploring changes past, or dreading change
Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,
The fine vocation of the sword and lance
With the gross aims and body-bending toil
Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.
Yet, by the good knight's leave, the two estates
Are graced with some resemblance. Errant those,
Exiles and wanderers; and the like are these,
Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
Carrying relief for nature's simple wants.
What though no higher recompence they seek
Than honest maintenance, by irksome toil
Full oft procured, yet such may claim respect,
Among the intelligent, for what this course
Enables them to be and to perform,
Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
While solitude permits the mind to feel;
And doth instruct her to supply defects
By the division of her inward self,
For grateful converse: and to these poor men,
As I have heard you boast with honest pride,
Nature is bountiful; where'er they go,
Kind nature's various wealth is all their own.
Versed in the characters of men; and bound,
By tie of daily interest, to maintain
Conciliatory manners and smooth speech;
Such have been, and still are, in their degree,
Examples efficacious to refine
Rude intercourse; apt instruments to excite,
By importation of unlook'd-for arts,
Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice;
Raising, through just gradation, savage life
To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
Within their moving magazines is lodged
Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt
Th' affections seated in the mother's breast,
And in the lover's fancy; and to feed
The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
By these itinerants, as experienced men,
Counsel is given; contention they appease

With healing words; and in remotest wilds,
Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring;
Could the proud quest of chivalry do more?"

"Happy," rejoin'd the Wanderer, "they who gain
A panegyric from your generous tongue!
But, if to these wayfarers once pertain'd
Aught of romantic interest, 'tis gone;
Their purer service, in this realm at least,
Is past for ever. An inventive age
Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
A new and unforeseen creation rise
From out the labours of a peaceful land,
Wielding her potent enginery to frame
And to produce, with appetite as keen
As that of war, which rests not night or day,
Industrious to destroy! With fruitless pains
Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
Wish'd for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came—
Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill;
Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
The footpath faintly mark'd, the horse-track wild,
And formidable length of plashy lane,
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place,)
Have vanish'd—swallow'd up by stately roads,
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of England's farthest glens. The earth has lent
Her waters, air her breezes; and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless interchange,
Glistening along the low and woody dale,
Or on the naked mountain's lofty side.
Meanwhile, at social industry's command,
How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
Where not a habitation stood before,
The abodes of men irregularly mass'd
Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts
O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.

And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
He sees the barren wilderness erased,
Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims
How much the mild directress of the plough
Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!
Hence is the wide sea peopled,—and the shores
Of Britain are resorted to by ships
Freighted from every climate of the world
With the world's choicest produce. Hence that sum
Of keels that rest within her crowded ports
Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;
That animating spectacle of sails
Which, through her inland regions, to and fro
Pass with the respirations of the tide,
Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,
Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
Of thunder, daunting those who would approach
With hostile purposes the blessèd isle,
Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
Impregnable of liberty and peace.

"And yet, O happy pastor of a flock
Faithfully watch'd, and, by that loving care
And Heaven's good providence, preserved from taint!
With you I grieve, when on the darker side
Of this great change I look; and there behold,
Through strong temptation of those gainful arts,
Such outrage done to nature as compels
The indignant power to justify herself;
Yea, to avenge her violated rights,
For England's bane. When soothing darkness spreads
O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus express'd
His recollections, "and the punctual stars,
While all things else are gathering to their homes,
Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturb'd,
As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart
Of all-beholding man, earth's thoughtful lord,
Then in full many a region, once like this
The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light,
Prepared for never-resting labour's eyes,
Breaks from a many-window'd fabric huge:
And at the appointed hour a bell is heard,—
Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll
That spake the Norman conqueror's stern behest,
A local summons to unceasing toil!
Disgorged are now the ministers of day;

And as they issue from the illumined pile,
A fresh band meets them at the crowded door,
And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,
That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,
Mother and little children, boys and girls
Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
Within this temple, where is offer'd up
To gain—the master idol of the realm,
Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old
Our ancestors, within the still domain
Of vast cathedral or conventual church,
Their vigils kept; where tapers day and night
On the dim altar burn'd continually,
In token that the house was evermore
Watching to God. Religious men were they;
Nor would their reason, tutor'd to aspire
Above this transitory world, allow
That there should pass a moment of the year
When in their land the Almighty's service ceased.

"Triumph who will in these profaner rites
Which we, a generation self-extoll'd,
As zealously perform—I cannot share
His proud complacency: yet I exult,
Casting reserve away—exult to see
An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed; almost a soul
Imparted to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
Which by the thinking mind have been compell'd
To serve the will of feeble-bodied man.
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come,
When, strengthen'd, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gain'd,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes—
Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves—
Palmyra, central in the desert—fell;
And the arts died by which they had been raised.
Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
Upon the plain of vanish'd Syracuse,
And feelingly the sage shall make report

How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is that philosophy whose sway is framed
For mere material instruments—how weak
Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropp'd
By virtue. He, with sighs of pensive grief,
Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness!"

When from the Wanderer's lips these words had fall'n,
I said, "And did in truth these vaunted arts
Possess such privilege, how could we escape
Regret and painful sadness, who revere,
And would preserve, as things above all price,
The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheer'd a low estate?
Oh! where is now the character of peace,
Sobriety, and order, and chaste love,
And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
And pure goodwill, and hospitable cheer,
That made the very thought of country life
A thought of refuge for a mind detain'd
Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd?—
Where now the beauty of the Sabbath kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest—and where the winning grace
Of all the lighter ornaments attach'd
To time and season, as the year roll'd round?"

"Fled!" was the Wanderer's passionate response;
"Fled utterly! or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this;
Which I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change a year—a month—
May bring; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires,
Drink the pure water of its innocent stream
With lip almost as pure. Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
How art thou blighted for the poor man's heart!
Lo! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
The habitations empty! or perchance
The mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe;
No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
Or in despatch of each day's little growth

Of household occupation; no nice arts
Of needlework; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with pride;
Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind;
Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command!
The father—if perchance he still retain
His old employments—goes to field or wood,
No longer led or follow'd by his sons;
Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight;
Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth;
Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
Ne'er to return! That birthright now is lost.
Economists will tell you that the state
Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
And false as monstrous! Can the mother thrive
By the destruction of her innocent sons?
In whom a premature necessity
Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
The infant being in itself, and makes
Its very spring a season of decay?
The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
Whether a pining discontent survive,
And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued
The soul depress'd; dejected—even to love
Of her dull tasks, and close captivity.
Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fix'd in his soul, so early and so deep,
Without his own consent, or knowledge, fix'd
He is a slave to whom release comes not,
And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds and in the ancient woods,
Or when the sun is rising in the heavens,
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
Of his attainments? no: but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment, whiten'd o'er with cotton flakes,
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait and cowering—his lip pale—
His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
From out those languid eyes could break, or blush
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the port,
Of no mean being? One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should appear

Sublime—from present purity and joy!
The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
Thus gone for ever, this organic frame,
Which from Heaven's bounty we receive, instinct
With light and gladsome motions, soon becomes
Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely pour'd
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs its functions; rarely competent
To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
The gentle visitations of the sun,
Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
On such foundations?"
"Hope is none for him!"
The pale Recluse indignantly exclaim'd,
"And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
Yet be it ask'd, in justice to our age,
If there were not, before those arts appear'd,
These structures rose, commingling old and young,
And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint;
Then if there were not, in our far-famed isle,
Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
Air unimprison'd and had lived at large;
Yet walk'd beneath the sun, in human shape,
As abject as degraded? At this day,
Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
A ragged offspring, with their own blanch'd hair
Crown'd like the image of fantastic Fear;
Or wearing, we might say, in that white growth
An ill-adjusted turban for defence
Or fierceness, wreath'd around their sunburnt brows,
By savage nature's unassisted care.
Naked, and colour'd like the soil, the feet
On which they stand; as if thereby they drew
Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
From earth, the common mother of us all.
Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
Are framed to strike dismay, but the outstretch'd hand
And whining voice denote them supplicants
For the least boon that pity can bestow.
Such on the breast of darksome heaths are found;
And with their parents dwell upon the skirts
Of furze-clad commons; and are born and rear'd
At the mine's mouth, beneath impending rocks,
Or in the chambers of some natural cave;

And where their ancestors erected huts,
For the convenience of unlawful gain,
In forest purlieus; and the like are bred,
All England through, where nooks and slips of ground
Purloin'd in times less jealous than our own,
From the green margin of the public way,
A residence afford them, 'mid the bloom
And gaiety of cultivated fields.
Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale)
Do I remember ofttimes to have seen
'Mid Buxton's dreary heights. Upon the watch,
Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand;
Then, following closely with the cloud of dust,
An uncouth feat exhibit, and are gone,
Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.
Up from the ground they snatch the copper coin,
And, on the freight of merry passengers
Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed;
And spin—and pant—and overhead again,
Wild pursuivants! until their breath is lost,
Or bounty tires,—and every face that smiled
Encouragement hath ceased to look that way.
But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
These, bred to little pleasure in themselves,
Are profitless to others. Turn we then
To Britons born and bred within the pale
Of civil polity, and early train'd
To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,
The bread they eat. A sample should I give
Of what this stock produces to enrich
And beautify the tender age of life,
A sample fairly cull'd—ye would exclaim,
'Is this the whistling ploughboy whose shrill notes
Impart new gladness to the morning air?'
Forgive me! if I venture to suspect
That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
Are of no finer frame: his joints are stiff;
Beneath a cumbrous frock that to the knees
Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
Fellows to those which lustily upheld
The wooden stools for everlasting use,
On which our fathers sate. And mark his brow:
Under whose shaggy canopy are set
Two eyes, not dim, but of a healthy stare;
Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange;
Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
A look or motion of intelligence
From infant conning of the Christ-cross-row
Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,

Till perfect mast'ry crown the pains at last.
What kindly warmth from touch of fost'ring hand,
What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheath'd in ice?
This torpor is no pitiable work
Of modern ingenuity; no town
Nor crowded city may be tax'd with aught
Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
To which in after-years he may be roused.
This boy the fields produce; his spade and hoe,
The carter's whip which on his shoulder rests
In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
The sceptre of his sway; his country's name,
Her equal rights, her churches and her schools,
What have they done for him? And, let me ask,
For tens of thousands uninform'd as he?
In brief—what liberty of mind is here?"

This cheerful sally pleased the mild good man,
To whom the appeal couch'd in those closing words
Was pointedly address'd; and to the thoughts
Which, in assent or opposition, rose
Within his mind, he seem'd prepared to give
Prompt utterance; but, rising from our seat,
The hospitable Vicar interposed
With invitation earnestly renew'd.
We follow'd, taking as he led, a path
Along a hedge of stately hollies framed,
Whose flexile boughs, descending with a weight
Of leafy spray, conceal'd the stems and roots
That gave them nourishment. How sweet, methought,
When the fierce wind comes howling from the north,
How grateful, this impenetrable screen!
Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
On rural business passing to and fro
Was the commodious walk; a careful hand
Had mark'd the line, and strown the surface o'er
With pure cerulean gravel from the heights
Fetch'd by the neighbouring brook. Across the vale
The stately fence accompanied our steps;
And thus the pathway, by perennial green
Guarded and graced, seem'd fashion'd to unite,
As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
The Pastor's mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity conjoin'd
With feminine allurement soft and fair,
The mansion's self display'd; a reverend pile
With bold projections and recesses deep;

Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood
Fronting the noontide sun. We paused to admire
The pillar'd porch, elaborately emboss'd;
The low wide windows with their mullions old;
The cornice richly fretted, of gray stone;
And that smooth slope from which the dwelling rose,
By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers
And flowering shrubs, protected and adorn'd.
Profusion bright! and every flower assuming
A more than natural vividness of hue,
From unaffected contrast with the gloom
Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
Of yew, in which survived some traces, here
Not unbecoming, of grotesque device
And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof
Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
Blending their diverse foliage with the green
Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasp'd
The huge round chimneys, harbour of delight
For wren and redbreast, where they sit and sing
Their slender ditties when the trees are bare.
Nor must I pass unnoticed (leaving else
The picture incomplete, as it appear'd
Before our eyes) a relic of old times
Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
Of nicest workmanship; which once had held
The sculptured image of some patron saint,
Or of the blessèd Virgin, looking down
On all who enter'd those religious doors.

But lo! where from the rocky garden mount,
Crown'd by its antique summer-house, descends,
Light as the silver fawn, a radiant girl;
For she hath recognised her honour'd friend
The Wanderer, ever welcome! A prompt kiss
The gladsome child bestows at his request,
And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
Hangs on the old man with a happy look,
And with a pretty restless hand of love.
We enter; need I tell the courteous guise
In which the lady of the place received
Our little band, with salutation meet
To each accorded? Graceful was her port;
A lofty stature undepress'd by time,
Whose visitation had not spared to touch
The finer lineaments of frame and face;
To that complexion brought which prudence trusts in
And wisdom loves. But when a stately ship

Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast
On homeward voyage, what if wind and wave,
And hardship undergone in various climes,
Have caused her to abate the virgin pride,
And that full trim of inexperienced hope
With which she left her haven—not for this,
Should the sun strike her, and the impartial
breeze
Play on her streamers, doth she fail to assume
Brightness and touching beauty of her own,
That charm all eyes—so bright to us appear'd
This goodly matron, shining in the beams
Of unexpected pleasure. Soon the board
Was spread, and we partook a plain repast.

Here in cool shelter, while the scorching heat
Oppress'd the fields, we sate, and entertain'd
The mid-day hours with desultory talk
From trivial themes to general argument
Passing, as accident or fancy led,
Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose
And answer flow'd, the fetters of reserve
Dropp'd from our minds; and even the shy Recluse
Resumed the manners of his happier days;
He in the various conversation bore
A willing, and at times a forward part;
Yet with the grace of one who in the world
Had learn'd the art of pleasing, and had now
Occasion given him to display his skill,
Upon the steadfast vantage-ground of truth.
He gazed with admiration unsuppress'd
Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale,
Seen, from the shady room in which we sate,
In soften'd perspective; and more than once
Praised the consummate harmony serene
Of gravity and elegance, diffused
Around the mansion and its whole domain;
Not, doubtless, without help of female taste
And female care. "A blessèd lot is yours!"
He said, and with that exclamation breathed
A tender sigh; but, suddenly the door
Opening, with eager haste two lusty boys
Appear'd, confusion checking their delight.
Not brothers they in feature or attire,
But fond companions, so I guess'd, in field,
And by the river side—from which they come,
A pair of anglers, laden with their spoil.
One bears a willow pannier on his back,
The boy of plainer garb, and more abash'd

In countenance—more distant and retired.
Twin might the other be to that fair girl
Who bounded towards us from the garden mount.
Triumphant entry this to him!—for see,
Between his hands he holds a smooth blue stone,
On whose capacious surface is outspread
Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted trouts;
Ranged side by side, in regular ascent,
One after one, still lessening by degrees
Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle.
Upon the board he lays the sky-blue stone
With its rich spoil: their number he proclaims;
Tells from what pool the noblest had been dragg'd;
And where the very monarch of the brook,
After long struggle, had escaped at last—
Stealing alternately at them and us
(As doth his comrade too) a look of pride.
And, verily, the silent creatures made
A splendid sight, together thus exposed;
Dead—but not sullied or deform'd by death,
That seem'd to pity what he could not spare.

But oh! the animation in the mien
Of those two boys!—yea, in the very words
With which the young narrator was inspired,
When, as our questions led, he told at large
Of that day's prowess! Him might I compare,
His look, tones, gestures, eager eloquence,
To a bold brook which splits for better speed,
And, at the self-same moment, works its way
Through many channels, ever and anon
Parted and reunited: his compeer
To the still lake, whose stillness is to the eye
As beautiful, as grateful to the mind.
But to what object shall the lovely girl
Be liken'd? She whose countenance and air
Unite the graceful qualities of both,
E'en as she shares the pride and joy of both.

My gray-hair'd friend was moved; his vivid eye
Glisten'd with tenderness; his mind, I knew,
Was full, and had, I doubted not, return'd,
Upon this impulse, to the theme erewhile
Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys
Did now withdraw to take their well-earn'd meal;
And he, (to whom all tongues resign'd their rights
With willingness—to whom the general ear
Listen'd with readier patience than to strain
Of music, lute, or harp,—a long delight,

That ceased not when his voice had ceased,) as one
Who from truth's central point serenely views
The compass of his argument, began
Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

BOOK IX.

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE.

Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the universe—Its noblest seat the human soul—How lively this principle is in childhood—Hence the delight in old age of looking back upon childhood—The dignity, powers, and privileges of age asserted—These not to be looked for generally, but under a just government—Right of a human creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere instrument—Vicious inclinations are best kept under by giving good ones an opportunity to shew themselves—The condition of multitudes deplored from want of due respect to this truth on the part of their superiors in society—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light—Genuine principles of equality—Truth placed within reach of the humblest—Happy state of the two boys again adverted to—Earnest wish expressed for a system of national education established universally by Government—Glorious effects of this foretold—Wanderer breaks off—Walk to the lake—Embark—Description of scenery and amusements—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being, in the course of which he contrasts with ancient barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him—The change ascribed to Christianity—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead—Gratitude to the Almighty—Return over the lake—Parting with the Solitary—Under what circumstances.

"To every form of being is assign'd,"
Thus calmly spake the venerable sage,
"An *active* principle: howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures, in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mix'd;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude: from link to link
It circulates, the soul of all the worlds.
This is the freedom of the universe;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know, and yet is reverenced least,
And least respected, in the human mind,
Its most apparent home. The food of hope
Is meditated action; robb'd of this,

Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
We perish also; for we live by hope
And by desire; we see by the glad light,
And breathe the sweet air of futurity;
And so we live, or else we have no life.
To-morrow, nay, perchance, this very hour,
(For every moment has its own to-morrow,)
Those blooming boys, whose hearts are almost sick
With present triumph, will be sure to find
A field before them freshen'd with the dew
Of other expectations; in which course
Their happy year spins round. The youth obeys
A like glad impulse; and so moves the man
'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears;
Or so he ought to move. Ah! why in age
Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood, but that there the soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpair'd
Of her own native vigour—but for this,
That it is given her thence in age to hear
Reverberations, and a choral song,
Commingling with the incense that ascends,
Undaunted, towards the imperishable heavens,
From her own lonely altar? Do not think
That good and wise will ever be allow'd,
Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate
As shall divide them wholly from the stir
Of hopeful nature. Rightly is it said
That man descends into the vale of years;
Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
And not presumptuously, I trust, of age,
As of a final eminence, though bare
In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 'tis not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power—
A throne, which may be liken'd unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those
High peaks, that bound the vale where now we are.
Faint and diminish'd to the gazing eye,
Forest and field, and hill and dale, appear,
With all the shapes upon their surface spread.
But while the gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea, almost on the mind itself, and seems
All unsubstantialized—how loud the voice
Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river in the vale below
Ascending! for on that superior height

Who sits is disencumber'd from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged
To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air
That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves,
Many and idle, touches not his ear:
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,
By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied; and the soul, that would incline
To listen, is prevented or deterr'd.

"And may it not be hoped that, placed by age
In like removal, tranquil, though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss,
But for some favour, suited to our need?
What more than this, that we thereby should gain
Fresh power to commune with th' invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear, sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude, whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the plain below.
But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
Of man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course,
Then only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect,
Nor bodies crush'd by unremitting toil;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
Proof of the sacred love she bears for all;
Whose birthright reason, therefore, may insure.
For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself
Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope
And reason's sway predominates, even so far,
Country, society, and time itself,
That saps the individual's bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do by th' almighty Ruler's grace, partake
Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
And cherishing with ever-constant love,
That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turn'd
Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offering or a sacrifice, a tool
Or implement, a passive thing employ'd
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment

Of common right or interest in the end;
Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil? Hence an after-call
For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
And ofttimes death, avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
Intrust the future. Not for these sad issues
Was man created; but t' obey the law
Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known,
That when we stand upon our native soil,
Unelbow'd by such objects as oppress
Our active powers, those powers themselves become
Strong to subvert our noxious qualities:
They sweep away infection from the heart,
And, by the substitution of delight,
Suppress all evil; whence the being moves
In beauty through the world; and all who see
Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood."

"Then," said the Solitary, "by what power
Of language shall a feeling heart express
Her sorrow for that multitude in whom
We look for health from seeds that have been sown
In sickness, and for increase in a power
That works but by extinction? On themselves
They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts
To know what they must do; their wisdom is
To look into the eyes of others, thence
To be instructed what they must avoid:
Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
How with most quiet and most silent death,
With the least taint and injury to the air
The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
And their immortal soul, may waste away."

The sage rejoin'd: "I thank you—you have spared
My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
A wide compassion, which with you I share,
When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
A most familiar object of our days—
A little one, subjected to the arts
Of modern ingenuity, and made
The senseless member of a vast machine,
Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel,
Think not that, pitying him, I could forget
The rustic boy, who walks the fields untaught,
The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
And miserable hunger. Much—too much,

Of this unhappy lot, in early youth
We both have witness'd, lot which I myself
Shared, though in mild and merciful degree:
Yet was my mind to hindrances exposed,
Through which I struggled, not without distress
And sometime injury, like a sheep enthrall'd
'Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that breaks
Through a strong net, and mounts upon the wind,
Though with her plumes impair'd. If they, whose souls
Should open while they range the richer fields
Of merry England, are obstructed less
By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
That tens of thousands at this day exist
Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
Of those who once were vassals of her soil,
Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
Which it sustain'd. But no one takes delight
In this oppression; none are proud of it;
It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
Were turn'd to evils that are new and chosen,
A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
But all too fondly follow'd and too far;
To victims, which the merciful can see
Nor think that they are victims, turn'd to wrongs,
Which women, who have children of their own,
Regard without compassion, yea, with praise!
I spake of mischief which the wise diffuse
With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads,
The healthier, the securer, we become;
Delusion which a moment may destroy!
Lastly, I mourn'd for those whom I had seen
Corrupted and cast down, on favour'd ground,
Where circumstance and nature had combined
To shelter innocence, and cherish love:
Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
Possess'd of health, and strength, and peace of mind;
Thus would have lived, or never have been born.

"Alas! what differs more than man from man!
And whence that difference—whence but from himself?
For see the universal race endow'd
With the same upright form—the sun is fix'd,
And the infinite magnificence of heaven,
Within the reach of every human eye;
The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears;

The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.
Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom in the will;
Conscience to guide and check; and death to be
Foretasted, immortality presumed.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be deem'd
The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark,
Hard to be won, and only by a few!
Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scatter'd at the feet of man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here; no special boon
For high, and not for low; for proudly graced—
And not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughty palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving that hath made
So wide a difference betwixt man and man.

"Then let us rather fix our gladden'd thoughts
Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
Of blooming boys (whom we beheld even now)
Blest in their several and their common lot!
A few short hours of each returning day,
The thriving prisoners of their village school;
And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant homes
Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy;
To breathe and to be happy, run and shout

Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss;
For every genial power of heaven and earth,
Through all the seasons of the changeful year,
Obsequiously doth take upon herself
To labour for them—bringing each in turn
The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
Beauty, or strength! Such privilege is theirs,
Granted alike in the outset of their course
To both; and, if that partnership must cease,
I grieve not,"—to the Pastor here he turn'd,
"Much as I glory in that child of yours,
Repine not for his cottage comrade, whom
Belike no higher destiny awaits
Than the old hereditary wish fulfill'd;
The wish for liberty to live—content
With what Heaven grants—and die, in peace of mind,
Within the bosom of his native vale.
At least, whatever fate the noon of life
Reserves for either, this is sure, that both
Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn;
Whether regarded as a jocund time,
That in itself may terminate, or lead
In course of nature to a sober eve.
Both have been fairly dealt with; looking back
They will allow that justice has in them
Been shewn, alike to body and to mind."

He paused, as if revolving in his soul
Some weighty matter; then, with fervent voice
And an impassion'd majesty, exclaim'd—

"Oh for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and to inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised,—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustain'd; or run
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through weary life without the aid
Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free!

This right, as sacred almost as the right
To exist and be supplied with sustenance
And means of life, the lisping babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence;
And the rude boy—who, having overpass'd
The sinless age, by conscience is enroll'd,
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the sacred faculty of speech
To impious use—by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known his need.
This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain address'd,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity,
Urge it in vain; and, therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to Heaven,
It mounts to reach the State's parental ear;
Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
The unquestionable good—which, England, safe
From interference of external force,
May grant at leisure; without risk incurr'd
That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
Others shall e'er be able to undo.

"Look! and behold, from Calpe's sunburnt cliffs
To the flat margin of the Baltic Sea,
Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
Laws overturn'd; and territory split,
Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind,
And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
Which, ere they gain consistence, by a gust
Of the same breath are shatter'd and destroy'd.
Meantime the sovereignty of these fair isles
Remains entire and indivisible:
And, if that ignorance were removed which acts
Within the compass of their several shores
To breed commotion and disquietude,
Each might preserve the beautiful repose
Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres.
The discipline of slavery is unknown
Amongst us,—hence the more do we require
The discipline of virtue; order else
Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
Thus, duties rising out of good possess'd,
And prudent caution needful to avert

Impending evil, do alike require
That permanent provision should be made
For the whole people to be taught and train'd.
So shall licentiousness and black resolve
Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
Their place; and genuine piety descend,
Like an inheritance, from age to age.

"With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
To the prevention of all healthful growth,
Through mutual injury! Rather in the law
Of increase and the mandate from above
Rejoice!—and ye have special cause for joy.
For, as the element of air affords
An easy passage to the industrious bees
Fraught with their burthens; and a way as smooth
For those ordain'd to take their sounding flight
From the throng'd hive, and settle where they list
In fresh abodes—their labour to renew;
So the wide waters, open to the power,
The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
Her swarms, and in succession send them forth,
Bound to establish new communities
On every shore whose aspect favours hope
Or bold adventure; promising to skill
And perseverance their deserved reward.
Yes," he continued, kindling as he spake,
"Change wide and deep, and silently perform'd,
This land shall witness; and, as days roll on,
Earth's universal frame shall feel th' effect,
Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanized society; and bloom
With civil arts, and send their fragrance forth,
A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.
From culture, universally bestow'd
On Britain's noble race in freedom born,
Expect these mighty issues; from the pains
And quiet care of unambitious schools,
Instructing simple childhood's ready ear,
Thence look for these magnificent results!
Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
Are at its centre, British lawgivers;
Ah! sleep not there in shame! Shall Wisdom's voice,
From out the bosom of these troubled times
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill

Refuse to echo the sublime decree?
Trust not to partial care a general good;
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need. Your country must complete
Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
Now, when oppression, like th' Egyptian plague
Of darkness, stretch'd o'er guilty Europe, makes
The brightness more conspicuous, that invests
The happy island where ye think and act;
Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
Shew to the wretched nations for what end
The powers of civil polity were given."

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
Than, looking forth, the gentle lady said,
"Behold, the shades of afternoon have fallen
Upon this flow'ry slope; and see—beyond—
The lake, though bright, is of a placid blue,
As if preparing for the peace of evening.
How temptingly the landscape shines! The air
Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moor'd
Beneath a shelt'ring tree." Upon this hint
We rose together: all were pleased; but most
The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flush'd with joy.
Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
She vanish'd—eager to impart the scheme
To her loved brother and his shy compeer.
Now was there bustle in the Vicar's house
And earnest preparation. Forth we went,
And down the valley on the streamlet's bank
Pursued our way, a broken company,
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
Thus, having reach'd a bridge, that overarch'd
The hasty rivulet, where it lay becalm'd
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A twofold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathèd horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful,
Beneath him, shew'd his shadowy counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seem'd centre of his own fair world:
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight!

"Ah! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it!"
These few words
The lady whisper'd, while we stood and gazed
Gather'd together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
In like low voice to my particular ear,
"I love to hear that eloquent old man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant
On human life from infancy to age.
How pure his spirit—in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest attitude!
While he is speaking, I have power to see
Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased,
Then, with a sigh, I sometimes feel, as now,
That combinations so serene and bright,
Like those reflected in yon quiet pool,
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
To great and small disturbances exposed."
More had she said—but sportive shouts were heard;
Sent from the jocund hearts of those two boys.
Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
Down the green field came tripping after us.
When we had cautiously embark'd, the pair
Now for a prouder service were address'd:
But an inexorable law forbade,
And each resign'd the oar which he had seized.
Whereat, with willing hand I undertook
The needful labour—grateful task!—to me
Pregnant with recollections of the time
When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere!
A youth, I practised this delightful art;
Toss'd on the waves alone, or, 'mid a crew
Of joyous comrades. Now the reedy marge
Clear'd, with a strenuous arm I dipp'd the oar
Free from obstruction; and the boat advanced
Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
That, disentangled from the shady boughs
Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
With correspondent wings th' abyss of air.
"Observe," the Vicar said, "yon rocky isle
With birch-trees fringed; my hand shall guide the helm,
While thitherward we bend our course; or while
We seek that other, on the western shore,—
Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,
Supporting gracefully a massy dome

Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the deep."

"Turn where we may," said I, "we cannot err
In this delicious region." Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest ground, and scatter'd groves,
And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood
They ceased not to surround us; change of place,
From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.
Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portray'd
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!
Suffice it, therefore, if the rural muse
Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her poet speaks
Of trivial occupations well devised,
And unsought pleasures springing up by chance;
As if some friendly genius had ordain'd
That, as the day thus far had been enrich'd
By acquisition of sincere delight,
The same should be continued to its close.

One spirit animating old and young,
A gipsy fire we kindled on the shore
Of the fair isle with birch-trees fringed—and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
The beverage drawn from China's fragrant herb.
Launch'd from our hands, the smooth stone skimm'd the lake;
With shouts we roused the echoes; stiller sounds
The lovely girl supplied—a simple song,
Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks
To be repeated there, but gently sank
Into our hearts, and charm'd the peaceful flood.
Rapaciously we gather'd flow'ry spoils
From land and water! lilies of each hue—
Golden and white, that float upon the waves,
And court the wind; and leaves of that shy plant
(Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,
That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
Her pensive beauty; from the breeze her sweets.

Such product and such pastime did the place
And season yield; but, as we re-embark'd,
Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
Of that wild spot, the Solitary said,

In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
"The fire, that burn'd so brightly to our wish,
Where is it now? Deserted on the beach,
It seems extinct; nor shall the fanning breeze
Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
Whose ends are gain'd? Behold an emblem here
Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys!
And, in this unpremeditated slight
Of that which is no longer needed, see
The common course of human gratitude!"

This plaintive note disturb'd not the repose
Of the still evening. Right across the lake
Our pinnace moves: then, coasting creek and bay,
Glades we beheld, and into thickets peep'd,
Where couch the spotted deer; or raised our eyes
To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat
Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls.
Thus did the bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursue her voyage, till a point was gain'd
Where a projecting line of rock, that framed
A natural pier, invited us to land.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We clomb a green hill's side, and thence obtain'd,
Slowly, a less and less obstructed sight
Of the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the whole lake, in compass seen: far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old church-tower,
In majesty presiding o'er the vale
And all her dwellings; seemingly preserved
From the intrusion of a restless world
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied,
With resting-place of mossy stone; and there
We sate reclined, admiring quietly
The frame and general aspect of the scene;
And each not seldom eager to make known
His own discoveries; or to favourite points
Directing notice, merely from a wish
T' impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.
That rapturous moment ne'er shall I forget
When these particular interests were effaced
From every mind! Already had the sun,
Sinking with less than ordinary state,
Attain'd his western bound; but rays of light—
Now suddenly diverging from the orb,
Retired behind the mountain tops or veil'd
By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown

Of the blue firmament—aloft—and wide;
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Pierced through their thin ethereal mould, ere we,
Who saw, of change were conscious, had become
Vivid as fire—clouds separately poised,
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scatter'd through half the circle of the sky;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
That which the heavens display'd, the liquid deep
Repeated; but with unity sublime!

While from the grassy mountain's open side
We gazed, in silence hush'd, with eyes intent
On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
The Priest, in holy transport, thus exclaim'd:—

"Eternal Spirit! universal God!
Power inaccessible to human thought
Save by degrees and steps which Thou hast deign'd
To furnish; for this image of Thyself,
To the infirmity of mortal sense
Vouchsafed; this local, transitory type
Of Thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
Of those who fill Thy courts in highest heaven,
The radiant cherubim;—accept the thanks
Which we, Thy humble creatures, here convened,
Presume to offer; we, who from the breast
Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
The faint reflections only of Thy face,
Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
Such as they are who in Thy presence stand
Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
Imperishable majesty stream'd forth
From Thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
Of all dishonour—cleansed from mortal stain.
Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude
Time's weary course! Or if, by Thy decree,
The consummation that will come by stealth
Be yet far distant, let Thy Word prevail,
Oh! let Thy Word prevail, to take away
The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
As it is written in Thy holy book,
Throughout all lands; let every nation hear
The high behest, and every heart obey:
Both for the love of purity, and hope

Which it affords, to such as do Thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall rise,
To have a nearer view of Thee in heaven.
Father of good! this prayer in bounty grant,
In mercy grant it to Thy wretched sons.
Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
And cruel wars expire. The way is mark'd,
The guide appointed, and the ransom paid.
Alas! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger still;
Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
Proffer'd to all, while yet on earth detain'd.
So fare the many; and the thoughtful few,
Who, in the anguish of their souls, bewail
This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
Shall it endure? Shall enmity and strife,
Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed
And the kind never perish? Is the hope
Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
A peaceable dominion, wide as earth,
And ne'er to fail? Shall that blest day arrive
When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
In crowded cities, without fear shall live
Studious of mutual benefit—and he,
Whom morning wakes, among sweet dews and flowers
Of every clime, to till the lonely field,
Be happy in himself? The law of faith,
Working through love, such conquest shall it gain!
Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve?
Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart!
And with that help the wonder shall be seen
Fulfill'd, the hope accomplish'd; and Thy praise
Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

"Once, while the name Jehovah was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bow'd their heads
To gods delighting in remorseless deeds;
Gods which themselves had fashion'd, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of yon mountain cove,
To those inventions of corrupted man
Mysterious rites were solemnised; and there,
Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods,
Of those dread idols, some, perchance, received
Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard

Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,
Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
Of human victims, offered up to appease
Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
Had visionary faculties to see
The thing that hath been as the thing that is,
Aghast we might behold this spacious mere
Bedimm'd with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
Flung from the body of devouring fires,
To Taranis erected on the heights
By priestly hands, for sacrifice perform'd
Exultingly, in view of open day
And full assemblage of a barbarous host;
Or to Andates, female power! who gave
(For so they fancied) glorious victory.
A few rude monuments of mountain stone
Survive; all else is swept away.—How bright
The appearances of things! From such how changed
The existing worship; and, with those compared,
The worshippers how innocent and blest!
So wide the difference, a willing mind
At this affecting hour might almost think
That Paradise, the lost abode of man,
Was raised again; and to a happy few,
In its original beauty, here restored.

"Whence but from Thee, the true and only God,
And from the faith derived through Him who bled
Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
Of good from evil; as if one extreme
Were left—the other gain'd. O ye, who come
To kneel devoutly in yon reverend pile,
Call'd to such office by the peaceful sound
Of Sabbath bells; and ye who sleep in earth,
All cares forgotten, round its hallow'd walls!
For you, in presence of this little band
Gather'd together on the green hill-side,
Your Pastor is embolden'd to prefer
Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King;
Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands have made
Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
And in good works; and him, who is endow'd
With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.
Concious of that abundant favour shower'd
On you, the children of my humble care;
On your abodes, 'mid this beloved land,
Our birthplace, home, and country, while on earth
We sojourn,— loudly do I utter thanks

With earnest joy, that will not be suppress'd.
These barren rocks, your stern inheritance;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or hush'd; the roaring waters, or the still;—
They see the offering of my lifted hands—
They hear my lips present their sacrifice—
They know if I be silent, morn or even:
For though in whispers speaking, the full heart
Will find a vent; and thought is praise to Him,
Audible praise to Thee, omniscient Mind,
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow!"

This vesper service closed, without delay,
From that exalted station, to the plain
Descending, we pursued our homeward course
In mute composure, o'er the shadowy lake,
Beneath a faded sky. No trace remain'd
Of those celestial splendours; gray the vault,
Pure, cloudless ether; and the star of eve
Was wanting; but inferior lights appear'd
Faintly, too faint almost for sight; and some
Above the darken'd hills stood boldly forth
In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attain'd
Her mooring-place; where, to the sheltering tree,
Our youthful voyagers bound fast her prow,
With prompt yet careful hands. This done, we paced
The dewy fields; but ere the Vicar's door
Was reach'd, the Solitary check'd his steps;
Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestow'd
A farewell salutation, and the like
Receiving, took the slender path that leads
To the one cottage in the lonely dell,
His chosen residence. But, ere he turn'd
Aside, a welcome promise had been given
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
Of yet another summer's day, consumed
In wandering with us through the valleys fair,
And o'er the mountain wastes. "Another sun,"
Said he, "shall shine upon us ere we part,
Another sun, and peradventure more;
If time, with free consent, be yours to give,
And season favours."

To enfeebled power,
From this communion with uninjured minds,
What renovation had been brought; and what
Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,

Dejected, and habitually disposed
To seek, in degradation of the kind,
Excuse and solace for her own defects;
How far those erring notions were reform'd;
And whether aught, of tendency as good
And pure, from further intercourse ensued;
This (if delightful hopes, as heretofore,
Inspire the serious song, and gentle hearts
Cherish, and lofty minds approve the past)
My future labours may not leave untold.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE;

OR,

THE FATE OF THE NORTONS.

"WEAK is the will of man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe; and joy, for human kind,
A mournful thing,—so transient is the blaze!"
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty, assign'd
To elevate the more than reasoning mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined:
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

IN trellis'd shed with clustering roses gay,
And, MARY! oft beside our blazing fire,
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
Did we together read in Spenser's lay
How Una, sad of soul—in sad attire,
The gentle Una, born of heavenly birth,
To seek her knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, beloved! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious, in compassion shed
For her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white lamb which in a line she led,—
And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
Like the brave lion slain in her defence.

Notes could we hear as of a fairy shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;

Till, in the bosom of our rustic cell,
We by a lamentable change were taught
That "bliss with mortal man may not abide:"—
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow,
For us the voice of melody was mute.
But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence fail'd not to bestow
A timely promise of unlook'd-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

It soothed us—it beguiled us—then to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose aery motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the spirit to rebel;
Then, with mild Una in her sober cheer,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wander'd, willing to partake
All that she suffer'd for her dear lord's sake.

Then, too, this song of *mine* once more could please,
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is temper'd and allay'd by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior kinds; whom forest trees
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds;—fair creatures!—to whom Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic story cheer'd us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And of the recompence which conscience seeks,
A bright, encouraging example shows;
Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks,
Needful amid life's ordinary woes;—
Hence, not for them unfitted who would bless
A happy hour with holier happiness.

He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive;
Oh that my mind were equal to fulfil
The comprehensive mandate which they give—
Vain aspiration of an earnest will!
Yet in this moral strain a power may live,
Beloved Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
April 20, 1816.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FIRST.

From Bolton's old monastic tower
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun is bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of the crystal Wharf,
Through the vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company—
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms.
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path, or no path, what care they!
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.

What would they there? Full fifty years
That sumptuous pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doom'd to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste:
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing, with a voice of power,
That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival.
And in the shatter'd fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part;
A rural chapel, neatly dress'd,
In covert like a little nest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.

Fast the churchyard fills; anon
Look again, and they all are gone:
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!

And scarcely have they disappear'd
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard:
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 'tis the sunrise now of zeal,
And faith and hope are in their prime,
In great Eliza's golden time.

A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hush'd, without and within;
For, though the priest more tranquilly
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
When soft! the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen,
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the churchyard ground,
And right across the verdant sod
Towards the very house of God,
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven,
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.

Lie silent in your graves, ye dead!
Lie quiet in your churchyard bed!
Ye living tend your holy cares,
Ye multitude pursue your prayers,
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'Tis a work for Sabbath hours
If I with this bright creature go:
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a spirit for one day given,
A gift of grace from purest heaven.

What harmonious pensive changes

Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this pile of state,
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Is through space of open day,
Where the enamour'd sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath;
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes,—
High-ribb'd vault of stone, or cell
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.

The presence of this wandering doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess
With lustre of a saintly show;
And, re-appearing, she no less
To the open day gives blessedness.
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?
Fair pilgrim! harbours she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for choir or shrine,
Crush'd as if by wrath divine—
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipp'd, or where man abode—
For old magnificence undone—
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing,—
The altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament,—
The dormitory's length laid bare,
Where the wild rose blossoms fair;
And sapling ash, whose place of birth
Is that lordly chamber's hearth?
She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds stretch'd alone:
A warrior, with his shield of pride

Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation press'd,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast
Methinks she passeth by the sight,
As a common creature might;
If she be doom'd to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves, with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;
And in this way she fares, till at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gently as a weary wave
Sinks when the summer breeze hath died,
Against an anchor'd vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.

The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the river in its flowing:
Can there be a softer sound?
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant creature lies
Couch'd upon the dewy grass,
Pensively with downcast eyes.
When now again the people rear
A voice of praise with awful cheer!
It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng—
And quickly spread themselves abroad—
While each pursues his several road.
But some, a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung,
Turn, with obeisance gladly paid,
Towards the spot, where full in view,
The lovely doe of whitest hue,
Her Sabbath couch has made.

It was a solitary mound;
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood;

Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.

"Look, there she is, my child! draw near;
She fears not—wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm;"—but still the boy,
To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back, and smiled, and blush'd for joy,
A shamefaced blush of glowing red!
Again the mother whisper'd low,
"Now you have seen the famous doe;
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this Sabbath-day;
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her Sabbath morning, foul or fair."

This whisper soft repeats what he
Had known from early infancy.
Bright is the creature—as in dreams
The boy had seen her—yea, more bright—
But is she truly what she seems?
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself—and doubts—and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallow'd place.
Nor to the child's inquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined:
For, spite of sober truth, that sees
A world of fix'd remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle creature wrong.

That bearded, staff-supported sire
(Who in his youth had often fed
Full cheerily on convent bread,
And heard old tales by the convent fire,

And lately hath brought home the scars
Gather'd in long and distant wars,)
That old man—studious to expound
The spectacle—hath mounted high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Aäliza mourn'd
Her son, and felt in her despair,
The pang of unavailing prayer;
Her son in Wharf's abysses drown'd,
The noble boy of Egremound,
From which affliction, when God's grace
At length had in her heart found place,
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up—this stately Priory!
The lady's work—but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent doe;
Which, though seemingly doom'd in its breast to sustain
A soften'd remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright,
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door,
And through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down and see a grisly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There, face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce esquire,
A valiant man, and a name of dread,
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;
Who dragg'd Earl Pembroke from Banbury church,
And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!
Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the white doe loiter there,
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent;
So thinks that dame of haughty air,
Who hath a page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Well may her thoughts be harsh; for she
Numbers among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!

That slender youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale,
He also hath his own conceit:
It is, thinks he, the gracious fairy

W. Smaill
BORDET

Who loved the shepherd lord to meet
In his wanderings solitary;
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of nature's hidden powers,
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
'Twas said that she all shapes could wear,
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair,
And taught him signs, and shew'd him sights,
In Craven's dens, on Cumbria's heights;
When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely gray,
Nor left him at his later day.
And hence, when he, with spear and shield,
Rode, full of years, to Flodden field,
His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scotland's king,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wish'd for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp or courtly state;
Him his own thoughts did elevate,
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's humble quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton's dear fraternity,
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him the starry sky;
Or in their cells with him did pry
For other lore, through strong desire
Searching the earth with chemic fire;
But they and their good works are fled,
And all is now disquieted,
And peace is none, for living or dead!

Ah, pensive scholar! think not so,
But look again at the radiant doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy heap!

Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yea, many overcome, in spite
Of recollections clear and bright,

Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturb'd repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see! they vanish, one by one;
And last, the doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By busy dreams and fancies wild,
To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this pile we stand
In solitude and utter peace:
But, harp! thy murmurs may not cease,—
Thou hast breeze-like visitings;
For a spirit with angel wings
Hath touch'd thee, and a spirit's hand:
A voice is with us—a command
To chant, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

CANTO SECOND.

The harp in lowliness obey'd;
And first we sang of the greenwood shade,
And a solitary maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,
With her, and with her sylvan friend;
The friend who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguish'd light,—
Her last companion, in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.

For she it was,—'twas she who wrought
Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colours and in gold,
An unbless'd work, which, standing by,
Her father did with joy behold,
Exulting in the imagery;
A banner—one that did fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will:
For on this banner had her hand
Embroider'd (such was the command)
The sacred cross, and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company!

It was the time when England's queen
Twelve years had reign'd, a sovereign dread;

Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturb'd upon her virgin head;
But now the inly-working north
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy's and in Neville's right,
Two earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent,
And boldly urged a general plea,—
The rites of ancient piety
To be by force of arms renew'd;
Glad prospect for the multitude!
And that same banner, on whose breast
The blameless lady had express'd
Memorials chosen to give life
And sunshine to a dangerous strife,
This banner, waiting for the call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone hall.

It came—and Francis Norton said,
"O father! rise not in this fray,—
The hairs are white upon your head:
Dear father! hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day.
Bethink you of your own good name;
A just and gracious queen have we,
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity.
'Tis meet that I endure your scorn,—
I am your son, your eldest born;
But not for lordship or for land,
My father do I clasp your knees;
The banner touch not, stay your hand,—
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blissful ease;
For these my brethren's sake—for me—
And, most of all, for Emily!"

Loud noise was in the crowded hall,
And scarcely could the father hear
That name, which had a dying fall,
The name of his only daughter dear;
And on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his wet eyes were glorified;
Then seized the staff, and thus did say:
"Thou, Richard, bear'st thy father's name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same;
Thy place be on my better hand;

And seven as true as thou, I see,
Will cleave to this good cause and me."
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway
All follow'd him, a gallant band!

Forth when sire and sons appear'd,
A gratulating shout was rear'd,
With din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horsed and harness'd with him to ride;
A shout to which the hills replied!

But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent—under dreary weight,—
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook, totter'd, swam before his sight,
A phantasm like a dream of night.
Thus overwhelm'd and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And when he waked at length, his eye
Was on the calm and silent sky,
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth's green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military cheer,
Faint, but it reach'd that shelter'd spot;
He heard, and it disturb'd him not.

There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasp'd unknowingly,—
Had blindly grasp'd, in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart agony;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath review'd;
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave man, when he shall see
That form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily?
Oh! hide them from each other,—hide,
Kind Heaven, this pair severely tried!

He saw her, where in open view
She sate, beneath the spreading yew,
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
How could he choose but shrink or sigh;
He shrunk, and mutter'd inwardly,
"Might ever son *command* a sire,
The act were justified to-day."
This to himself—and to the maid,

Whom now he had approach'd, he said:
"Gone are they,—they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may."

He paused, her silence to partake,
And long it was before he spake:
Then, all at once, his thoughts turn'd round,
And fervent words a passage found.

"Gone are they, bravely, though misled,
With a dear father at their head!
The sons obey a natural lord;
The father had given solemn word
To noble Percy,—and a force
Still stronger bends him to his course.
This said, our tears to-day may fall
As at an innocent funeral.
In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of sire and sons;
Untried our brothers were beloved,
And now their faithfulness is proved;
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring.
There were they all in circle—there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that will not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright twins were side by side;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified,
Was he, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower!
I, in the right of eldest-born,
And in a second father's place,
Presumed to stand against their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face;
Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my father knelt and pray'd;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke,
Methought, was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.

"Then be we, each, and all, forgiven!
Thee, chiefly thee, my sister dear,
Whose pangs are register'd in heaven,—
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face,

As that unhallow'd banner grew
Beneath a loving old man's view.
Thy part is done—thy painful part;
Be thou then satisfied in heart!
A further, though far easier task
Than thine hath been, my duties ask;
With theirs my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend;
Their aims I utterly forswear;
But I in body will be there.
Unarm'd and naked will I go,
Be at their side come weal or woe:
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand."
Therewith he threw away the lance
Which he had grasp'd in that strong trance,
Spurn'd it—like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.

"For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or man; such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress
In that thy very strength must lie.
O sister, I could prophesy!
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well.
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee a woman and thence weak;
Hope nothing, I repeat; for we
Are doom'd to perish utterly:
'Tis meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss:
But look not for me when I'm gone,
And be no further wrought upon.
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that!
Weep, if that aid thee; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.
For we must fall, both we and ours,
This mansion and these pleasant bowers,
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead, hall,—

Our fate is theirs, will reach them all;
The young horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a stranger;
The hawk forget his perch,—the hound
Be parted from his ancient ground:
The blast will sweep us all away,
One desolation, one decay!
And even this creature!"—which words saying
He pointed to a lovely doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying,
Fair creature, and more white than snow—
"Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came,—
Ere she had learn'd to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone Hall.
But thou, my sister, doom'd to be
The last leaf which by Heaven's decree
Must hang upon a blasted tree;
If not in vain we have breathed the breath
Together of a purer faith—
If hand in hand we have been led
And thou, (O happy thought this day!)
Not seldom foremost in the way—
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read—
If, when at home, our private weal
Hath suffer'd from the shock of zeal,
Together we have learn'd to prize
Forbearance and self-sacrifice—
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared—
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth,
Be strong—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place;
A soul, by force of sorrows high
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturb'd humanity!"

He ended—or she heard no more:
He led her from the yew-tree shade,
And at the mansion's silent door,
He kiss'd the consecrated maid;
And down the valley he pursued,
Alone, the armèd multitude.

CANTO THIRD.

Now joy for you and sudden cheer,
Ye watchmen upon Brancepeth towers,
Looking forth in doubt and fear,
Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it! let your masters hear
That Norton with his band is near.
The watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word,—and the earls discry
Forthwith the armèd company
Marching down the banks of Were.

Said fearless Norton to the pair
Gone forth to hail him on the plain—
"This meeting, noble lords, looks fair;
I bring with me a goodly train;
Their hearts are with you:—hill and dale
Have help'd us: Ure we cross'd and Swale,
And horse and harness follow'd—see
The best part of their yeomanry!
Stand forth, my sons!—these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way soe'er our fate incline,
These will be faithful to the end;
They are my all"—voice fail'd him here,—
"My all save one, a daughter dear!
Whom I have left, the mildest birth,
The meekest child on this bless'd earth.
I had—but these are by my side,
These eight, and this is a day of pride!
The time is ripe—with festive din,
Lo! how the people are flocking in,—
Like hungry fowl to the feeder's hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land."

He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of peasants, in their homely gear;
And mix'd with these, to Brancepeth came
Grave gentry of estate and name,
And captains known for worth in arms;
And pray'd the earls in self-defence
To rise and prove their innocence.
"Rise, noble earls—put forth your might
For holy Church and the people's right!"

The Norton fix'd, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said, "The minds of men will own

No loyal rest while England's crown
Remains without an heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;
And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm.
Brave earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering state complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope,
Even for our altars—for the prize
In heaven, of life that never dies;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.
Behold!"—and from his son, whose stand
Was on his right—from that guardian hand,
He took the banner, and unfurl'd
The precious folds—"Behold," said he,
"The ransom of a sinful world;
Let this your preservation be,—
The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred cross on which Jesus died!
This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth,
A maid o'er whom the blessèd Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued."
"Uplift the standard!" was the cry
From all the list'ners that stood round;
"Plant it,—by this we live or die!"
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said, "The prayer which ye have heard,
Much-injured earls, by these preferr'd,
Is offer'd to the saints, the sigh
Of tens of thousands, secretly."
"Uplift it!" cried once more the band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued.
"Uplift it!" said Northumberland—
Whereat, from all the multitude,
Who saw the banner rear'd on high
In all its dread emblazonry,
With tumult and indignant rout
A voice of uttermost joy broke out:
The transport was roll'd down the river of Were,

And Durham, the time-honour'd Durham, did hear,
And the towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirr'd by
the shout!

Now was the North in arms: they shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy's voice: and Neville sees
His followers gathering in from Tees,
From Were, and all the little rills
Conceal'd among the forkèd hills.
Seven hundred knights, retainers all
Of Neville, at their master's call
Had sate together in Raby Hall;
Such strength that earldom held of yore;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed chivalry.
Not loath the sleepy lance to wield,
And greet the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons; and, furthermore,
Came foot and horseman of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty;
Appear'd, with free and open hate
Of novelties in church and state;
Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire,
And the Romish priest, in priest's attire;
And thus, in arms, a zealous band
Proceeding under joint command,
To Durham first their course they bear,
And in St Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang mass,—and tore the book of prayer,—
And trod the Bible beneath their feet.

Thence marching southward, smooth and free
"They muster'd their host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see;"
The choicest warriors of the North:
But none for undisputed worth
Like those eight sons; who, in a ring,
Each with a lance, erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,
Stood by their sire on Clifford Moor,
In youthful beauty flourishing,
To guard the standard which he bore.
With feet that firmly press'd the ground
They stood, and girt their father round;
Such was his choice,—no steed will he
Henceforth bestride; triumphantly
He stood upon the verdant sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!

Proud was the field of sons and sire,
Of him the most; and, sooth to say,
No shape of man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day.
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly personage;
A stature undepress'd in size,
Unbent, which rather seem'd to rise,
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to higher height;
Magnific limbs of wither'd state,—
A face to fear and venerate,—
Eyes dark and strong—and on his head
Rich locks of silver hair thick spread,
Which a brown morion half conceal'd,
Light as a hunter's of the field;
And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the banner-staff might rest
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating pageantry.

Who sees him? Many see, and one
With unparticipated gaze,
Who 'mong these thousands friend hath none,
And treads in solitary ways.
He, following wheresoe'er he might,
Hath watch'd the banner from afar,
As shepherds watch a lonely star,
Or mariners the distant light
That guides them on a stormy night.
And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising-ground, yon heathy spot,
He takes this day his far-off stand,
With breast unmail'd, unweapon'd hand.
Bold is his aspect; but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary power,
He there stands fix'd, from hour to hour.
Yet sometimes, in more humble guise,
Stretch'd out upon the ground he lies,—
As if it were his only task
Like herdsman in the sun to bask,
Or by his mantle's help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind:
And thus, with short oblivion blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes, and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is waken'd by the sight

That he thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doom'd to flow.

To London were the chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A royal army is gone forth
To quell the rising of the North;
They march with Dudley at their head,
And in seven days' space will to York be led!
Can such a mighty host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near?
The earls upon each other gazed;
And Neville was oppress'd with fear;
For though he bore a valiant name,
His heart was of a timid frame.
And bold if both had been, yet they
"Against so many may not stay;"
And therefore will retreat to seize
A stronghold on the banks of Tees;
There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power
From Naworth comes; and Howard's aid
Be with them—openly display'd.

While through the host, from man to man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,
The standard giving to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The chieftains, to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake,—"We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!
How often hath the strength of Heaven
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston—what a host
He conquer'd! Saw we not the plain
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved, while to battle moved
The standard on the sacred wain,
On which the gray-hair'd barons stood,
And the infant heir of Mowbray's blood,
Beneath the saintly ensigns three,
Their confidence and victory?
Shall Percy blush, then, for his name—
Must Westmoreland be ask'd with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross?
When, as the vision gave command,
The Prior of Durham with holy hand

Saint Cuthbert's relic did uprear
Upon the point of a lofty spear,
And God descended in His power,
While the monks pray'd in maiden's bower.
Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the untrue;
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise;
We, we the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold."
The chiefs were by his zeal confounded,
But word was given, and the trumpet sounded;
Back through the melancholy host
Went Norton and resumed his post.
"Alas!" thought he, "and have I borne
This banner raised so joyfully,
This hope of all posterity,
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,
A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the frail clouds a mockery!"
"Even these poor eight of mine would stem"—
Half to himself, and half to them
He spake—"would stem, or quell a force
Ten times their number, man and horse;
This by their own unaided might,
Without their father in their sight,
Without the cause for which they fight;
A cause, which on a needful day
Would breed us thousands brave as they."
So speaking, he upraised his head
Towards that imagery once more;
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before;
A shock of intimations vain,
Blank fear, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought;
"Oh wherefore was her count'nance bright
With love divine and gentle light?
She did in passiveness obey,
But her faith lean'd another way.
Ill tears she wept,—I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake
Sad words to that mute animal,
The white doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steep'd, but not for Jesu's sake,
This cross in tears: by her, and one
Unworthier far, we are undone—

Her brother was it, who assail'd
Her tender spirit, and prevail'd.
Her other parent, too, whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid,
From reason's earliest dawn beguiled
The docile, unsuspecting child:
Far back—far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe!"
While thus he brooded, music sweet
Was play'd to cheer them in retreat;
But Norton linger'd in the rear:
Thought follow'd thought—and ere the last
Of that unhappy train was pass'd,
Before him Francis did appear.

"Now when 'tis not your aim t' oppose,
Said he, "in open field your foes;
Now that from this decisive day
Your multitude must melt away,
An unarm'd man may come, unblamed,
To ask a grace that was not claim'd
Long as your hopes were high; he now
May hither bring a fearless brow,
When his discountenance can do
No injury—may come to you.
Though in your cause no part I bear,
Your indignation I can share;
Am grieved this backward march to see,
How careless and disorderly!
I scorn your chieftains—men who lead,
And yet want courage at their need;
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?
My father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself, and sink to rest;
Be brother now to brother join'd!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remains behind,
I may bear witness in my breast,
To your nobility of mind!"

"Thou enemy—my bane and blight!
Oh, bold to fight the coward's fight
Against all good!"—but why declare,
At length, the issue of this prayer?
Or how, from his depression raised,
The father on his son had gazed;

Suffice it that the son gave way,
Nor strove that passion to allay,
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His brothers' wisdom, or their love;
But calmly from the spot withdrew
The like endeavours to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH.

From cloudless ether looking down,
The moon, this tranquil evening, sees
A camp, and a beleaguer'd town,
And castle like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees;
And, southward far, with moors between,
Hill-tops, and floods, and forests green,
The bright moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequester'd hall
A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;
While from one pillar'd chimney breathes
The silver smoke, and mounts in wreaths.
The courts are hush'd; for timely sleep
The greyhounds to their kennel creep;
The peacock in the broad ash-tree
Aloft is roosted for the night.
He who in proud prosperity
Of colours manifold and bright,
Walk'd round affronting the daylight;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perch'd, from yon lone tower
The hall-clock in the clear moonshine
With glittering finger points at nine.
Ah! who could think that sadness here
Had any sway—or pain—or fear?
A soft and lulling sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day;
The garden pool's dark surface—stirr'd
By the night insects in their play—
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen: and lo!
Not distant far the milk-white doe:
The same fair creature which was nigh,
Feeding in tranquillity,
When Francis utter'd to the maid

His last words in the yew-tree shade:
The same fair creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground;
Where now within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns, and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall
Of close-clipp'd foliage green and tall,
Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array,—
Beneath yon cypress spiring high
With pine and cedar spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighbourhood
Range unrestricted as the wind—
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.

But where at this still hour is she—
The consecrated Emily?
Even while I speak, behold the maid
Emerging from the cedar shade
To open moonshine where the doe
Beneath the cypress spire is laid,
Like a patch of April snow
Upon a bed of herbage green
Lingering, in a woody glade
Or behind a rocky screen—
Lonely relic! which, if seen
By the shepherd, is pass'd by
With an inattentive eye.
Nor more regard doth she bestow
Upon the uncomplaining doe!

Yet the meek creature was not free,
Erewhile, from some perplexity:
For thrice hath she approach'd this day
The thought-bewilder'd Emily;
Endeavouring in her gentle way,
Some smile or look of love to gain—
Encouragement to sport or play;
Attempts which by the unhappy maid
Have all been slighted or gainsaid.
Oh welcome to the viewless breeze!
'Tis fraught with acceptable feeling,
And instantaneous sympathies
Into the sufferer's bosom stealing.
Ere she hath reach'd yon rustic shed

Hung with late-flowering woodbine, spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revives a memory of those hours
When here, in this remote alcove
(While from the pendent woodbine came
Like odours, sweet as if the same)
A fondly anxious mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her years.
Yes, she is soothed: an image faint—
And yet not faint—a presence bright
Returns to her; 'tis that bless'd saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity
The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reform'd and purified.

'Tis flown—the vision; and the sense
Of that beguiling influence!
"But oh! thou angel from above,
Thou spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
Than ghosts are fabled to appear,
Sent upon embassies of fear;
As thou thy presence hast to me
Vouchsafed—in radiant ministry
Descend on Francis!—through the air
Of this sad earth to him repair,
Speak to him with a voice, and say,
That he must cast despair away!"

Then from within the embower'd retreat,
Where she had found a grateful seat,
Perturb'd she issues. She will go;
Herself will follow to the war,
And clasp her father's knees; ah, no!
She meets the insuperable bar,
The injunction by her brother laid;
His parting charge—but ill obey'd!
That interdicted all debate,
All prayer for this cause or for that;
All efforts that would turn aside
The headstrong current of their fate:
Her duty is to stand and wait;
In resignation to abide
The shock, and finally secure
O'er pain and grief a triumph pure.

She knows, she feels it, and is cheer'd;
At least her present pangs are check'd.
And now an ancient man appear'd,
Approaching her with grave respect.
Down the smooth walk which then she trod,
He paced along the silent sod,
And greeting her, thus gently spake:
"An old man's privilege I take;
Dark is the time—a woeful day!
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you?—point the way."

"Rights have you, and may well be bold;
You with my father have grown old
In friendship: go—from him—from me—
Strive to avert this misery!
This would I beg; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoin'd.
If prudence offer help or aid,
On *you* is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the will divine."

"Hope," said the sufferer's zealous friend,
"Must not forsake us till the end.
In Craven's wilds is many a den
To shelter persecuted men:
Far underground is many a cave
Where they might lie, as in the grave,
Until this storm had ceased to rave;
Or let them cross the river Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!"

"Ah, tempt me not!" she faintly sigh'd;
"I will not counsel nor exhort,—
With my condition satisfied;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befalls: be this your task,
This may be done, 'tis all I ask!"

She spake, and from the lady's sight
The sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a page
Bound on some errand of delight.
"The noble Francis, wise as brave,"
Thought he, "may have the skill to save:
With hopes in tenderness conceal'd,
Unarm'd he follow'd to the field.
Him will I seek: the insurgent powers
Are now besieging Barnard's towers,—

Grant that the moon which shines this night
May guide them in a prudent flight!"

But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.
Their flight the fair moon may not see;
For, from mid-heaven, already she
Hath witness'd their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile castle made;
But dark and dismal is the vault
Where Norton and his sons are laid!
Disastrous issue! He had said,
"This night yon haughty towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
Neville is utterly dismay'd,
For promise fails of Howard's aid;
And Dacre to our call replies
That he is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick; this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to the cause.
The breach is open; on the wall,
This night, the banner shall be planted!"
'Twas done. His sons were with him—all.
They belt him round with hearts undaunted:
And others follow—sire and son
Leap down into the court—"'Tis won!"
They shout aloud; but Heaven decreed
Another close
To that brave deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back, the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand;
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpower'd that gallant few.
"A rescue for the standard!" cried
The father from within the walls;
But see, the sacred standard falls!
Confusion through the camp spreads wide:
Some fled, and some their fears detain'd;
But ere the moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the west,
Of that rash levy nought remain'd.

CANTO FIFTH.

High on a point of rugged ground,
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell,
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
An edifice of warlike frame
Stands single—Norton Tower its name;
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
Upon a prospect without bound.

The summit of this bold ascent,
Though bleak and bare, and as seldom free
As Pendle Hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet,
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nortons met
To practise games and archery:
How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the heat of the noontide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the watch-tower did repair,
Commodious pleasure-house! and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare;
And the stern old lord of Rylstone Hall,
He was the proudest of them all!

But now, his child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro;
'Tis well that she hath heard the tale,—
Received the bitterness of woe:
Dead are they, they were doom'd to die;
The sons and father all are dead,
All dead save one: and Emily
No more shall seek this watch-tower high,
To look far forth with anxious eye;
She is relieved from hope and dread,
Though suffering in extremity.

For she had hoped—had hoped and fear'd—
Such rights did feeble nature claim;
And oft her steps had hither steer'd,
Though not unconscious of self-blame;
For she her brother's charge revered,
His farewell words; and by the same,
Yea, by her brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheer'd.

She turn'd to him, who, with his eye,
Was watching her while on the height
She sate, or wander'd restlessly,
O'erburden'd by her sorrow's weight—
To him who this dire news had told,
And now beside the mourner stood
(That gray-hair'd man of gentle blood,
Who with her father had grown old
In friendship, rival hunters they,
And fellow-warriors in their day)—
To Rylstone he the tidings brought;
Then on this place the maid had sought,
And told, as gently as could be,
The end of that sad tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.

To him the lady turn'd:—"You said
That Francis lives—*he* is not dead?"

"Your noble brother hath been spared;
To take his life they have not dared.
On him, and on his high endeavour,
The light of praise shall shine for ever!
Nor did he (such Heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain;
Not vainly struggled—in the might
Of duty seeing with clear sight;
He was their comfort to the last,
Their joy till every pang was past.

"I witness'd when to York they came:
What, lady, if their feet were tied!
They might deserve a good man's blame;
But, marks of infamy and shame,
These were their triumph, these their pride.
'Lo, Francis comes!' the people cried,
'A prisoner once, but now set free!
'Tis well, for he the worst defied
For sake of natural piety;
He rose not in this quarrel, he
His father and his brothers woo'd,
Both for their own and country's good,
To rest in peace—he did divide.
He parted from them; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity—
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity!'

"And so in prison were they laid—
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle maid!

For I am come with power to bless,
To scatter gleams through your distress
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love,
But most, compassion for your fate,
Lady!—for your forlorn estate;
Me did these move, and I made bold,
And entrance gain'd to that stronghold.

"Your father gave me cordial greeting;
But to his purposes, that burn'd
Within him, instantly return'd—
He was commanding and entreating,
And said, 'We need not stop, my son!
But I will end what is begun;
'Tis matter which I do not fear
To intrust to any living ear.'
And so to Francis he renew'd
His words, more calmly thus pursued:—

"'Might this our enterprise have sped,
Change wide and deep the land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green!
The darksome altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are roll'd away;
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the rood had been upraised
To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
Then, then, had I survived to see
New life in Bolton Priory;
The voice restored, the eye of truth
Re-open'd that inspired my youth;
Had seen her in her pomp array'd;
This banner (for such vow I made)
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same temple have found rest:
I would myself have hung it high,
Glad offering of glad victory!

"'A shadow of such thought remains
To cheer this sad and pensive time;
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble being—bids me climb
Even to the last—one effort more
To attest my faith, if not restore.

"'Here then,' said he, 'while I impart,
My son, the last wish of my heart.
The banner strive thou to regain;

And, if th' endeavour be not vain,
Bear it—to whom if not to thee
Shall I this lonely thought consign?—
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine,
To wither in the sun and breeze,
'Mid those decaying sanctities.
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there display'd;
Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
But for lost faith and Christ's dear name,
I helmeted a brow though white,
And took a place in all men's sight;
Yea, offer'd up this beauteous brood,
This fair unrivall'd brotherhood,
And turn'd away from thee, my son!
And left—but be the rest unsaid,
The name untouch'd, the tear unshed,—
My wish is known, and I have done:
Now promise, grant this one request—
This dying prayer—and be thou blest!'

"Then Francis answer'd fervently,
'If God so will, the same shall be.'

"Immediately this solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And officers appear'd in state
To lead the prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, lady, you to hear?
They rose—embraces none were given—
They stood like trees when earth and heaven
Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the band went forth.
They met, when they had reach'd the door,
The banner—which a soldier bore—
One marshall'd thus with base intent
That he in scorn might go before,
And holding up this monument,
Conduct them to their punishment;
So cruel Sussex, unrestrain'd
By human feeling, had ordain'd.
The unhappy banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the soldier's hand;
And all the people that were round
Confirm'd the deed in peace profound.
High transport did the father shed

Upon his son—and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath,
Together died a happy death!
But Francis, soon as he had braved
This insult, and the banner saved,
That moment, from among the tide
Of the spectators, occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore unobserved his charge away."

These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing pass'd of him who stood
With Emily, on the watch-tower height
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to encourage or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire,
Go high, no transport ever higher.
"Yet, yet in this affliction," said
The old man to the silent maid,
"Yet, lady! Heaven is good—the night
Shews yet a star which is most bright;
Your brother lives—he lives—is come,
Perhaps, already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place."
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone Hall her way she took.

CANTO SIXTH.

Why comes not Francis? Joyful cheer
In that paternal gratulation,
And glow of righteous indignation,
Went with him from the doleful city.
He fled—yet in his flight could hear
The death-sound of the minster bell;
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell
For him, the sweet half-open'd flower!
For all—all dying in one hour!
Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love
Should bear him to his sister dear
With motion fleet as wingèd dove;
Yea, like a heavenly messenger,
An angel-guest should he appear.
Why comes he not?—for westward fast

Along the plain of York he pass'd;
The banner-staff was in his hand,
The imagery conceal'd from sight,
And cross th' expanse in open flight;
Reckless of what impels or leads,
Uncheck'd he hurries on; nor heeds
The sorrow of the villagers;
From the triumphant cruelties
Of vengeful military force,
And punishment without remorse,
Uncheck'd he journeys—under law
Of inward occupation strong;
And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along,
It was the banner in his hand!—
He felt and made a sudden stand.

He look'd about like one betray'd:
What hath he done—what promise made?
Oh weak, weak moment—to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend,
And he the bearer? Can he go
Carrying this instrument of woe,
And find—find anywhere, a right
To excuse him in his country's sight?
No! will not all men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and strange?
Here is it,—but how—when—must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see?

Such conflict long did he maintain
Within himself, and found no rest;
Calm liberty he could not gain;
And yet the service was unblest.
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden—even that thought
Raised self-suspicion which was strong,
Swaying the brave man to his wrong:
And how, unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,
Its will intelligibly shewn,
Finds he the banner in his hand,
Without a thought to such intent,
Or conscious effort of his own—
And no obstruction to prevent
His father's wish and last command?
And, thus beset, he heaved a sigh,
Remembering his own prophecy
Of utter desolation, made

To Emily in the yew-tree shade :
He sigh'd, submitting to the power,
The might of that prophetic hour.
"No choice is left; the deed is mine—
Dead are they, dead!—and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the relic on the shrine."

So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued; and, on the second day,
He reach'd a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt—but hark! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace,
He heard, and with misgiving mind.
'Tis Sir George Bowes who leads the band :
They come, by cruel Sussex sent;
Who, when the Nortons from the hand
Of death had drunk their punishment,
Bethought him, angry and ashamed,
How Francis had the banner claim'd,
And with that charge had disappear'd;
By all the standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had quell'd
Thus far the opposer, and repell'd
All censure,—enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then review'd, and prompt word given,
That to what place soever fled,
He should be seized, alive or dead.

The troop of horse have gain'd the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round—"Behold the proof!
Behold the ensign in his hand;
He did not arm, he walk'd aloof—
For why?—to save his father's land;
Worst traitor of them all is he,
A traitor dark and cowardly!"

"I am no traitor!" Francis said,
"Though this unhappy freight I bear :
It weakens me, my heart hath bled
Till it is weak—but you beware,
Nor do a suffering spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong!"

At this, he from the beaten road
Retreated, towards a brake of thorn,
Which like a place of vantage shew'd;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence, with a warrior's brow,
He stood, nor weaponless was now;
He from a soldier's hand had snatch'd
A spear, and with his eyes he watch'd
Their motions, turning round and round:
His weaker hand the banner held;
And straight, by savage zeal impell'd,
Forth rush'd a pikeman, as if he,
Not without harsh indignity,
Would seize the same; instinctively,
To smite the offender, with his lance
Did Francis from the brake advance;
But, from behind, a treacherous wound
Unfeeling, brought him to the ground,—
A mortal stroke:—oh, grief to tell!
Thus, thus the noble Francis fell:
There did he lie, of breath forsaken;
The banner from his grasp was taken,
And borne exultingly away;
And the body was left on the ground where it lay.

Two days, as many nights, he slept
Alone, unnoticed, and unwept;
For at that time distress and fear
Possess'd the country far and near;
The third day, one who chanced to pass
Beheld him stretch'd upon the grass.
A gentle forester was he,
And of the Norton tenantry;
And he had heard that by a train
Of horsemen Francis had been slain.
Much was he troubled—for the man
Hath recognised his pallid face;
And to the nearest huts he ran,
And call'd the people to the place.
"How desolate is Rylstone Hall!"
Such was the instant thought of all:
And if the lonely lady there
Should be, this sight she cannot bear!
Such thought the forester express'd,
And all were sway'd, and deem'd it best
That, if the priest should yield assent
And join himself to their intent,
Then they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make;

That straightway buried he should be
In the churchyard of the Priory.
Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they, but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle blood,
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground:
So to the churchyard they are bound,
Bearing the body on a bier
In decency and humble cheer;
And psalms are sung with holy sound.

But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted:
She must behold!—so many gone,
Where is the solitary one?
And forth from Rylstone Hall stepp'd she,—
To seek her brother forth she went
And tremblingly her course she bent
Tow'rds Bolton's ruin'd Priory.
She comes, and in the vale hath heard
The funeral dirge—she sees the knot
Of people—sees them in one spot—
And darting like a wounded bird,
She reach'd the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest,—
The consummation, the whole ruth,
And sorrow of this final truth!

CANTO SEVENTH.

Thou spirit! whose angelic hand
Was to the harp a strong command,
Call'd the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this maiden's sake,
Say, spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her?—Is a rifted tomb
Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat,
Is that the sufferer's last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High climbing rock—deep sunless dale—
Sea—desert—what do these avail?

Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a calm recess of years!

'Tis done; despoil and desolation
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown,
The walks and pools neglect hath sown
With weeds, the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown;
The lordly mansion of its pride
Is stripp'd; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the spring!
And, with this silent gloom agreeing,
There is a joyless human being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed:
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone;
There seated, may this maid be seen,
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave tree stood,
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet birds' carolling.
Behold her, like a virgin queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of chance and change that hath been brought
To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy;
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face,—
There hath she fix'd it; yet it seems
To o'ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams—
Lose utterly—the tender gleams
Of gentleness, and meek delight
And loving-kindness ever bright.
Such is her sovereign mien; her dress
(A vest, with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain wool undyed)
Is homely—fashion'd to express
A wandering pilgrim's humbleness.

And she *hath* wander'd, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star:

Hath roam'd in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a wither'd leaf,
Yea, like a ship at random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her father's roof,
And put her fortitude to proof.
The mighty sorrow has been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustain'd by memory of the past
And strength of reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.

And so—beneath a moulder'd tree,
A self-surviving leafless oak,
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately flower
(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of deer came sweeping by,
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For, of that band of rushing deer,
A single one in mid career
Hath stopp'd, and fix'd its large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily.
A doe most beautiful, clear white,
A radiant creature, silver bright!

Thus check'd, a little while it stay'd;
A little thoughtful pause it made!
And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her—and more near,
Stopp'd once again: but as no trace
Was found of anything to fear,
Even to her feet the creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And look'd into the lady's face,
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
"It is," thought Emily, "the same,

The very doe of other years!"
The pleading look the lady view'd,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued
She melted into tears—
A flood of tears, that flow'd apace
Upon the happy creature's face.

O moment ever blest! O pair
Beloved of Heaven, Heaven's choicest care!
This was for you a precious greeting,
For both a bounteous, fruitful meeting.
Join'd are they, and the sylvan doe—
Can she depart—can she forego
The lady, once her playful peer,
And now her sainted mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings?
Long sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face,
And take this gift of Heaven with grace?

That day, the first of a reunion
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together;
And when, ere fall of evening dew
She from this sylvan haunt withdrew,
The white doe track'd with faithful pace
The lady to her dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The master of whose humble board
Once own'd her father for his lord;
A hut, by tufted trees defended,
Where Rylstone Brook with Wharf is blended.

When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the doe was there in sight.
She shrunk: with one frail shock of pain,
Received and follow'd by a prayer,
Did she behold—saw once again;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear;
But wheresoever she look'd round
All now was trouble-haunted ground.
So doth the sufferer deem it good
Even once again this neighbourhood
To leave. Unwoo'd, yet unforbidden,
The white doe follow'd up the vale,
Up to another cottage—hidden

In the deep fork of Amerdale:
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.
Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calm'd her, cheer'd, and fortified?
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed,
Endless history that lies
In her silent follower's eyes!
Who with a power like human reason,
Discerns the favourable season,
Skill'd to approach or to retire,
From looks conceiving her desire,
From look, deportment, voice, or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately writhed
Her arms, or over deeply breathed,
Walk'd quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindly intercourse ensue.
Oh! surely 'twas a gentle rousing
When she by gentle glimpse espied
The white doe on the mountain browsing,
Or in the meadow wander'd wide!
How pleased, when down the straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank!
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They like a nested pair reposed!
Fair vision! when it cross'd the maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as the whitest cloud on high,
Floating through the azure sky.
What now is left for pain or fear?
That presence, dearer and more dear,
Did now a very gladness yield
At morning to the dewy field,
While they side by side were straying,
And the shepherd's pipe was playing;
And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude.

With her companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came;
And, wandering through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old loves,

Undisturb'd and undistress'd,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring day of holy,
Mild, delicious melancholy:
Not sunless gloom, or unenlighten'd,
But by tender fancies brighten'd.

When the bells of Rylstone play'd
Their Sabbath music—"God us ayde!"
That was the sound they seem'd to speak—
Inscriptive legend, which I ween
May on those holy bells be seen,
That legend and her grandsire's name:
And oftentimes the lady meek
Had in her childhood read the same.
Words which she slighted at that day!
But now, when such sad change was wrought,
And of that lonely name she thought,
The bells of Rylstone seem'd to say,
While she sat listening in the shade,
With vocal music, "God us ayde!"
And all the hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lack'd she reason's firmest power;
But with the white doe at her side
Up doth she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence looks round her far and wide.
Her fate there measures,—all is still'd,—
The feeble hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfill'd,
Fulfill'd, and she sustains her part!
But here her brother's words have fail'd,—
Here hath a milder doom prevail'd;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful partner left,—
This single creature that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves.
If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him, for one or all;
Yet, sometimes—sometimes doth she weep—
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;
A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living friend.

Bless, tender hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot!
Which Emily doth sacred hold,
For reasons dear and manifold;—
Here hath she, here before her sight,

Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled pound
In which the creature first was found.
So beautiful the spotless thrall
(A lovely youngling white as foam)
That it was brought to Rylstone Hall;
Her youngest brother led it home,
The youngest, then a lusty boy,
Brought home the prize—and with what joy!

But most to Bolton's sacred pile,
On favouring nights she loved to go:
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced doe;
Nor did she fear in the still moonshine
To look upon St Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that show'd
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft and long
She sat in meditation strong:
And, when she from the abyss return'd
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourn'd;
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in her turn to meet
That recognition! the mild glance
Beam'd from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior creature!

A mortal song we frame, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;
Power which the viewless spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruin'd pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead,—
Dead—but to live again on earth,
A second and yet nobler birth;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!

Even such this blessèd pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted tow'rds her God:
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturb'd mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she, and could bend
A dear look to her lowly friend;—
There stopp'd; her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied—
Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world return'd no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and join'd
The Wharfdale peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
In Rylstone church her mortal frame
Was buried by her mother's side.

Most glorious sunset!—and a ray
Survives—the twilight of this day;
In that fair creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having fill'd a holy place,
Partakes, in her degree, Heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely cheer
Which her dear mistress once held dear:
Loves most what Emily loved most—
The enclosure of this churchyard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding ghost,
And every Sabbath here is found:
Comes with the people when the bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where way
Lies open on the Sabbath-day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumber'd with rich show
Of fretwork imagery laid low;
Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault,
By plate of monumental brass
Dim gleaming among weeds and grass,
And sculptured forms of warriors brave;

But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequester'd hillock green,
The pensive visitant is seen.
There doth the gentle creature lie
With those adversities unmoved;
Calm spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved!
And aye, methinks, this hoary pile,
Subdued by outrage and decay,
Looks down upon her with a smile,
A gracious smile, that seems to say,
"Thou, thou art not a child of Time,
But daughter of the Eternal Prime!"

ESSAY.

With the young of both sexes poetry is, like love, a passion; but for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And lastly, there are many who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature, in which poetry has continued to be comprehended *as a study*.

Into the above classes the readers of poetry may be divided; critics abound in them all; but from the last only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear;* not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged principle prepare for the inexperienced! What temptations to go astray are here held forth for those whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason! When a juvenile reader is in the

height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts, is ever at hand to justify extravagance and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and no doubt eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off if youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are at the same time modest and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse,—this appears to be the cause: that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem falls in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled, and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The book was probably taken up after an escape from the burthen of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher

poetry, an enlightened critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life—no man can *serve* (*i.e.*, obey with zeal, and fidelity) two masters.

As poetry is most just to its own Divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two classes of readers whom we have been considering are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to overrate the authors by whom these truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that if opinions touching upon religion occur which the reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathise with them, however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the reader is set against the author and his book. To these excesses, they who, from their professions, ought to be the most guarded against them are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest quality of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled as they are, and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious; and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply, by the heat with which they

defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity. The elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an "imperfect shadowing forth" of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the infinite Being accommodates Himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinities between religion and poetry—between religion making up the deficiencies of reason by faith, and poetry passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things submiting herself to circumscription and reconciled to substitutions—and poetry, ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error; so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion than that species the argument and scope of which is religious; and us lovers of the art have gone further astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither, then, shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value—for a mind at once poetical and philosophical?—for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government. Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb—for a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness?—and for active faculties capable of answering the demands which an author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it? Among those, and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed, that, as this class comprehends the only judgments which are trustworthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mistaught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system; no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with

what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalise rightly to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far, being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him—men who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany; confounded if he turn quick upon the wing; dismayed if he soar steadily "into the region;"—men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts, in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives; judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise is ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits, must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them. It will be further found, that when authors have at length raised themselves into general admiration, and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes;—a vivacious quality ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the political literature of this country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts correspond with these inferences.

Who is there that can now endure to read the "Creation" of Dubartes? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and when his poem was translated into our language, the Faëry Queen faded before it. The name of Spencer, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And, if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which

they bestow on those of other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

> "The laurel meed of mighty conquerors
> And poets *sage*"

are his own words; but his wisdom has in this particular been his worst enemy; while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been their best friend. But he was a great power; and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A dramatic author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly, the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted; but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors, Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in the later age as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakspeare stooped to accommodate himself to the people is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made little impression upon the ruling intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact, that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him.* His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays were acted for one of Shakspeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his edition of the plays, with a view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

* The learned Hakewell (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635) writing to refute the error "touching nature's perpetual and universal decay, cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bartas, and Spencer, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.

At this day, the French critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our nation: "the English with their buffon de Shakspeare," is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood, and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the poet: for among us it is current, I might say an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be "a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties." How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them,—heterogeneous as they often are,—constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human nature!

There is extant a small volume of miscellaneous poems in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that volume, the sonnets: though there is not a part of the writings of this poet where is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But from regard to the critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of these, or any production of Shakspeare, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in those little pieces; and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration as an inmate of the celestial regions, "there sitting where he durst not soar."

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope, in his youth, could pilfer from them without danger of detection. Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated I will not undertake to decide; nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary,—seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At

all events, it is certain that these poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the sonnets, Dr Johnson, as appears from Boswell's "Life" of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the "Pindaric Odes" of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers, whom Dr Johnson has strangely styled "metaphysical poets," were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, "Paradise Lost" made its appearance. "Fit audience find though few," was the petition addressed by the poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said, elsewhere, that he gained more than he asked. This, I believe, to be true; but Dr Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's countrymen were "*just* to it" upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But be it remembered that if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. The demand did not immediately increase; "for," says Dr Johnson, "many more readers" (he means persons in the habit of reading poetry) "than were supplied at first the nation did not afford." How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, 7th Edition, 1681. A book near it is "Flatman's Poems, 4th Edition, 1686." "Waller, 5th Edition," same date. "The Poems of Norris of Bemerton" not long after, went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know, but I well remember, that twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to shew—that if Milton's work was not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. Only 3000 copies of "Paradise Lost" sold in eleven years; and the nation, says Dr Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1644, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakspeare, which probably did not together make 1000 copies;—facts adduced by the critic to prove the "paucity of readers." There were readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorised, then, to affirm that the reception of "Paradise Lost," and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions

which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous.* How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies, or trading Journalist, of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this poem, everywhere impregnated with *original* excellence!

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles† in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that century. It is the work of an English peer of high accomplishments; its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of this kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the author, selecting among the poets of his own country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same date, Shaftesbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English poet ever attained during his lifetime, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them that the undue exertion of these arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues, with boyish inexperience, the praise which these compositions obtained tempted him into a belief that nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which the author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these poems contain some odious and even detestable passages, the effect, as Dr Johnson well observes, "of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to shew them grovelling and degrading." These

* Hughes is express upon this subject. In his dedication of Spenser's works to Lord Somers he writes thus, "It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful edition of 'Paradise Lost' that first brought that incomparable poem to be generally known and esteemed."

† This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

Pastorals, ludicrous to those who prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, "became popular, and were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations."

Something less than sixty years after the publication of "Paradise Lost" appeared Thomson's poem of "Winter;" which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? "It was no sooner read," says one of his contemporary biographers, "than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for anything in poetry beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing anything new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But in a short time the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions, too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt whether he should more admire the poet or love the man."

This case appears to bear strongly against us; but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting a passage or two in the "Windsor Forest" of Pope, and some delightful pictures in the Poems of Lady Winchelsea, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of "Paradise Lost" and the "Seasons," does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of night in one of his tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the Iliad. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic,

and senseless;* those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verse under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity. If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a poet that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature were not at that time holden in such estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to these appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of the "Seasons," the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little *more;* though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception that many would often fancy they recognised a likeness when they knew nothing of an original. Having shewn that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment, how is the rest to be accounted for? Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental commonplaces, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the "Seasons" the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories, (perhaps Damon and Musidora;) these also are prominent in our Collection of Extracts; and are the parts of his works which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to

* CORTES (*alone in a night-gown*)—

'All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead:
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head;
The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping flowers beneath the night-dew sweat;
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes."

DRYDEN'S "Indian Emperor."

the highest, only styles him "an elegant and philosophical poet;" nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative poet were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years after the publication of the "Seasons," pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope. In the "Castle of Indolence" (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious and diction more pure. Yet that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a few!

When Thomson died, Collins breathed his regrets into an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the poet's remains were deposited. The poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his lifetime was so small, and of course so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the "Seasons" of Thomson, though at a considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry;" collected, new-modelled, and, in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the editor, Mr Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales which appeared not long after its publication, and which were modelled, as the authors persuaded themselves, after the old ballad. The compilation, was, however, ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this country, into temporary neglect; while Burger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating, or imitating these reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems, which are the delight of the German nation. Dr Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that though, while he was writing under a mask, he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos, (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline, and by many other pieces,) yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the "Hermit of Warkworth," a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact with regret,

esteeming the genius of Dr Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom, in modern times, it has been cultivated. That even Burger (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Göthe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy might be shewn from many passages in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example—

"Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe;
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe.

"And soone she heard her true love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
'Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
'Tis I thy true love call.'"

Which is thus tricked out and dilated—

"Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Tha.
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen uber-all
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war;
Doch nur das Fraulein immerdar,
Voll Fiebrangst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte:
Da horch! Ein susser Liebeston
Kam leis empor geflogen.
'Ho, Trudchen, ho! Da bin ich schon!
Risch auf! Dich angezogen!'"

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail Macpherson! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian! The phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition; it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin consistence took its course through Europe upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the "Reliques" had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable; how selfish his conduct contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gave his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner on his own issue for a beggarly pittance! Open this far-famed book! I have done so at random, and the beginning of the Epic Poem Temora, in eight books, presents itself. "The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Gray torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds." Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion. Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of "Ossian." From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work it is exactly the reverse: every thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened,—yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his car-borne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface. Mr Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his very "*ands*" and his "*buts!*" and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the translators of the Bible, Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English poets are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own. It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as these pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no author in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the "Boy Chatterton," on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful

trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon poems*,—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the island is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless. Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the "Reliques" of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions! I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the "Reliques." I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy on this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish prefaces, biographical, and critical, for the works of some of the most eminent English poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and unquestionably to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the trade. The editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of "Prefatory Lives," and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley! What is become of the Morning Star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names are more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? —where is Spencer?—where Sydney?—and, lastly,—where he, whose rights as a poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated; where Shakspeare? These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made as in the case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed magnates; writers in metre utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock

of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them, but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, Where lies the particular relation of what has been said to this volume? The question will be easily answered by the discerning reader who is old enough to remember the taste that was prevalent when some of these poems were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of the island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of fame, has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, —must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value;—they are all proofs that, for the present time, I have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical works, it is this—that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them,—and much he will have in common;—but for what is peculiarly his own he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road; he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the false prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each

other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature, illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on men who stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here. TASTE, I would remind the reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor taken from a *passive* sense of the human body and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word imagination has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of taste, the process has been reversed; and, from the prevalence of dispositions, are at once injurious and discreditable, being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy, which, as nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word Imagination; but the word taste has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit inducing that aversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime,—are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever, without a sinking in the spirit of nations, have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because, without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliar impulse elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering;* but the connexion which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate, and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited in the fact that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry! But,

> "Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
> Itself discharges on its foes."

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute, or it never becomes vivid, and soon languishes and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original writer at his first appearance in the world. Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before. Of genius in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe; or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance or a conquest made by the soul of the poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian prince or general, stretched on palanquin, and borne by his slaves? No, he is invigorated and inspirited by his leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances would be instantaneously affected. And doubtless in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others that are complex and revolutionary; some to which the heart yields with gentleness; others against which it struggles with pride: these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected is language—a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting within his own mind a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative as well as a human pathos; an enthusiastic as well as an ordinary sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depth of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself, but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime—if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the

course of life from the sources of sublimity in the soul of man? can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word *popular* applied to new works in poetry; as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts, but that all men should run after its productions as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell! The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surface of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in everything which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness or to be made conscious of her power—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination—wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future, *there* the poet must reconcile himself for a season to a few scattered hearers. Grand thoughts, (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth,) as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the sister art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing,—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry of some kind or other has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good —that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal the individual quickly *perishes;* the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty, with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole that, in the opinion of the writer, the judgment of the people is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The people have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it

was said, above—that of *good* poetry, the *individual* as well as the species *survives*. And how does it survive but through the people? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

> "Past and future are the wings
> On whose support, harmoniously conjoin'd,
> Moves the great spirit of human knowledge."—*MS.*

The voice that issues from this spirit is that *vox populi* which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation or a transitory outcry,—transitory though it be for years, local though from a nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is anything of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the public, the writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the people, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and this done, takes leave of his readers by assuring them, that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of this volume, and the work to which they are subsidiary, evinced something of the "vision and the faculty divine," and that both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction; from becoming at this moment to the world as a thing that had never been.

THE END.

NOTES.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Page 109. *To the Daisy.*

THIS poem, and two others to the same flower, were written in the year 1802; which is mentioned, because in some of the ideas, though not in the manner in which those ideas are connected, and likewise even in some of the expressions, there is a resemblance to a poem (lately published) of Mr Montgomery's, entitled, "A Field Flower." This being said, Mr Montgomery will not think any apology due to him. I cannot, however, help addressing him in the words of the father of English poets:—

"Though it happe me to rehersin—
That ye han in your freshe songis saied,
Forberith me, and beth not ill apaied,
Sith that ye se I doe it in the honour
Of Love, and eke in service of the Flour."
1807.

p. 124. *The Seven Sisters.*

The story of this poem is from the German of FREDERICA BRUN.

p. 140. *The Horn of Egremont Castle.*

This story is a Cumberland tradition; I have heard it also related of the Hall of Hutton John, an ancient residence of the Huddlestones, in a sequestered valley upon the river Dacor.

p. 171. *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.*

Henry, Lord Clifford, &c., &c., who is the subject of this poem, was the son of John, Lord Clifford, who was slain at Towton Field, which John, Lord Clifford, as is known to the reader of English history, was the person who, after the battle of Wakefield, slew, in the pursuit, the young Earl of Rutland, son of the Duke of York, who had fallen in the battle, "in part of revenge," (say the authors of the history of Cumberland and Westmoreland,) "for the earl's father had slain his." A deed which worthily blemished the author, (saith Speed;) but who, as he adds, "dare promise anything temperate of himself in the heat of martial fury? chiefly, when it was resolved not to leave any branch of the York line standing; for so one maketh this lord to speak." This, no doubt, I would observe by the by, was an action sufficiently in the vindictive spirit of the times, and yet not altogether so bad as represented; for the earl was no child, as some writers would have him, but able to bear arms, being sixteen or seventeen years of age, as is evident from this, (say the Memoirs of the Countess of Pembroke, who was laudably anxious to wipe away, as far as could be, this stigma from the illustrious name to which she was born,) that he was the next child to King Edward the Fourth, which his

mother had by Richard, Duke of York, and that king was then eighteen years of age: and for the small distance betwixt her children, see Austin Vincent in his book of Nobility, p. 622, where he writes of them all. It may further be observed, that Lord Clifford, who was then himself only twenty-five years of age, had been a leading man and commander, two or three years together in the army of Lancaster, before this time; and therefore would be less likely to think that the Earl of Rutland might be entitled to mercy from his youth. But, independent of this act, at best a cruel and savage one, the family of Clifford had done enough to draw upon them the vehement hatred of the house of York: so that after the battle of Towton there was no hope for them but in flight and concealment. Henry, the subject of the poem, was deprived of his estate and honours during the space of twenty-four years; all which time he lived as a shepherd in Yorkshire, or in Cumberland, where the estate of his father-in-law (Sir Lancelot Threlkeld) lay. He was restored to his estate and honours in the first year of Henry the Seventh. It is recorded that, "when called to parliament, he behaved nobly and wisely; but otherwise came seldom to London or the court; and rather delighted to live in the country, where he repaired several of his castles, which had gone to decay during the late troubles." Thus far is chiefly collected from Nicholson and Burn; and I can add, from my own knowledge, that there is a tradition current in the village of Threlkeld and its neighbourhood, his principal retreat, that, in the course of his shepherd life, he had acquired great astronomical knowledge. I cannot conclude this note without adding a word upon the subject of those numerous and noble feudal edifices spoken of in the poem, the ruins of some of which are, at this day, so great an ornament to that interesting country. The Cliffords had always been distinguished for an honourable pride in these castles; and we have seen, that after the wars of York and Lancaster they were rebuilt. In the civil wars of Charles the First they were laid waste, and again restored almost to their former magnificence by the celebrated Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, &c., &c. Not more than twenty-five years after this was done, when the estates of Clifford had passed into the family of Tufton, three of these castles, namely, Brough, Brougham, and Pendagron, were demolished, and the timber and other materials sold by Thomas, Earl of Thanet. We will hope that, when the order was issued, the earl had not consulted the text of Isaiah lviii. 12, to which the inscription placed over the gate of Pendagron Castle, by the Countess of Pembroke (I believe his grandmother) at the time she repaired that structure, refers the reader:—"*And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundation of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.*" The Earl of Thanet, the present possessor of the estates, with a due respect for the memory of his ancestors, and a proper sense of the value and beauty of these remains of antiquity, has (I am told) given orders that they shall be preserved from all depredations.

p. 172. "*Earth help'd him with the cry of blood.*"

This line is from the "Battle of Bosworth Field," by Sir John Beaumont, (brother to the dramatist,) whose poems are written with so much spirit, elegance, and harmony.

p. 174. "*And both the undying fish that swim*
Through Bowscale Tarn," *&c.*

It is imagined by the people of the country that there are two immortal fish, inhabitants of this tarn, which lies in the mountains not far from Threlkeld. Blencathara, mentioned before, is the old and proper name of the mountain vulgarly called Saddle Back.

p. 174. "*Armour rusting in his halls*
On the blood of Clifford calls."

The martial character of the Cliffords is well known to the readers of

English history; but it may not be improper here to say, by way of comment on these lines, and what follows, that, besides several others who perished in the same manner, the four immediate progenitors of the person in whose hearing this is supposed to be spoken all died in the field.

THE EXCURSION.

Page 317. "*Much did he see of men.*"

"We learn from Cæsar and other Roman writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman convenience. In North America, travelling merchants from the settlements have done, and continue to do, much more toward civilising the Indian natives than all the missionaries, Papist or Protestant, who have ever been sent among them."—*Heron's Journey in Scotland.*

p. 352. "*Lost in unsearchable eternity!*"

Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with much pleasure, in Burnet's "Theory of the Earth," a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature.

p. 370. "*Of Mississippi, or that northern stream.*"

"A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *world*, by visiting *London*. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas, that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiæ, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the man of mind: he who is placed in the sphere of nature and of God might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St James's; he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him. But when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes; when he measures the long and watered savanna; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready-produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exaltation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for he says, 'These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.' He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts—and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially: his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars."—*From the Notes upon "The Hurricane," a poem, by William Gilbert.*

The reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book, is one of the finest passages of modern English prose.

p. 374. "*'Tis by comparison an easy task*
Earth to despise," &c.

See, upon this subject, Baxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Biography."

p. 376. *"Alas! the endowment of immortal power*
Is match'd unequally with custom, time," &c.

This subject is treated at length in the Ode "Intimations of Immortality," p. 300.

p. 378. *"Knowing the heart of man is set to be," &c.*

The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in italics, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole poem is very beautiful.

p. 422. *"And spires whose 'silent finger points to heaven.'"*

An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire steeples, which, as they cannot be referred to any other object, point, as with silent finger, to the sky and stars, and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich, though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heavenward. See "The Friend," by S. T. Coleridge, No. 14, p. 223.

p. 471. *"Perish the roses and the flowers of kings."*

The *Transit gloria mundi* is finely expressed in the introduction to the foundation-charters of some of the ancient abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the abbey of St Mary's, Furness, the translation of which is as follows:—

"Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of kings, emperors, and dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore," &c.

p. 475. *"Earth has lent*
Her waters, Air her breezes."

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with gratitude, the pleasing picture which, in his poem of "The Fleece," the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influence of manufacturing industry upon the face of this island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.

p. 492. *"Binding herself by statute."*

The discovery of Dr Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

Page 507. *"From Bolton's old monastic tower."*

It is to be regretted that at the present day Bolton Abbey wants this ornament; but the poem, according to the imagination of the poet, is composed in Queen Elizabeth's time. "Formerly," says Dr Whitaker, "over the transept was a tower." This is proved not only from the mention of bells at the dissolution, when they could have had no other place, but from the pointed roof of the choir, which must have terminated westward in some building of superior height to the ridge.

p. 507. *"A rural chapel, neatly dress'd."*

"The nave of the church, having been reserved at the dissolution for the use of the Saxon cure, is still a parochial chapel; and at this day is as well kept as the neatest English cathedral."

p. 507. *"Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak."*

"At a small distance from the great gateway stood the Prior's Oak, which was felled about the year 1710, and sold for £70. According to the price of wood at that time, it could scarcely have contained less than 1,408 feet of timber."

p. 512. *"When Lady Aälliza mourn'd."*

The detail of this tradition may be found in Dr Whitaker's book, and in the poem, "The Force of Prayer," p. 185.

p. 511. *"Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door."*

"At the east end of the north aisle of Bolton Priory church is a chantry belonging to Bethmesly Hall, and a vault where, according to tradition, the Claphams (who inherited this estate, by the female line, from the Mauleverers) were interred upright." John de Clapham, of whom this ferocious act is recorded, was a man of great note in his time; "he was a vehement partisan of the house of Lancaster, in whom the spirit of his chieftains, the Cliffords, seemed to survive."

p. 513. *"Who loved the shepherd lord to meet."*

See note (p. 569) on song at the feast of Brougham Castle.

p. 520. *"Ye watchmen upon Brancepeth Towers."*

Brancepeth Castle stands near the river Were, a few miles from the city of Durham. It formerly belonged to the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland.

p. 524. *"Of mitred Thurston, what a host*
He conquer'd!"

See the historians for the account of this memorable battle, usually denominated the Battle of the Standard.

p. 532. *"An edifice of warlike frame*
Stands single (Norton Tower its name.)"

It is so called to this day, and is thus described by Dr Whitaker:—"Rylstone Fell yet exhibits a monument of the old warfare between the Nortons and Cliffords. On a point of very high ground, commanding an immense prospect, and protected by two deep ravines, are the remains of a square tower, expressly said by Dodsworth to have been built by Richard Norton.

"But Norton Tower was probably a sort of pleasure-house in summer, as there are, adjoining to it, several large mounds (two of them are pretty entire) of which no other account can be given than that they were butts for large companies of archers.

"The place is savagely wild, and admirably adapted to the uses of a watch-tower."

p. 541. *"Despoil and desolation*
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown."

"After the attainder of Richard Norton, his estates were forfeited to the Crown, where they remained till the second or third of James; they were then granted to Francis, Earl of Cumberland."

p. 544. *"In the deep fork of Amerdale."*

"At the extremity of the parish of Burnsall, the valley of Wharf forks c into two great branches, one of which retains the name of Wharfdale to t source of the river; the other is usually called Littondale, but more ancient and properly Amordale. Dernbrook, which runs along an obscure valle from the north-west, is derived from a Teutonic word, signifying concea ment."—*Dr Whitaker.*

p. 545. *"When the bells of Rylstone play'd*
Their Sabbath music— "God us ayde."

On one of the bells of Rylstone church, which seems coeval with the build ing of the tower, is this cypher, I. N. for John Norton, and the motto "God us ayde."

p. 546. *"The grassy rock-encircled pound."*

Which is thus described by Dr Whitaker:—"On the plain summit of th hill are the foundations of a strong wall, stretching from the south-west to th north-east corner, of the tower, and to the edge of a very deep glen. From this glen, a ditch, several hundred yards long, runs south to another deep and rugged ravine. On the north and west, where the banks are very steep, no wall or mound is discoverable, paling being the only fence that would stand on such ground."

From the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," it appears that such pounds for deer, sheep, &c., were far from being uncommon in the south of Scotland. The principle of them was something like that of a wire mousetrap. On the declivity of a steep hill, the bottom and sides of which were fenced so as to be impassable, a wall was constructed nearly level with the surface on the outside, yet so high within, that without wings it was impossible to escape in the opposite direction. Care was probably taken that these enclosures should contain better feed than the neighbouring parks or forests; and whoever is acquainted with the habits of these sequacious animals, will easily conceive, that if the leader was once tempted to descend into the snare, a herd would follow.

I cannot conclude without recommending to the notice of all lovers of beautiful scenery, Bolton Abbey and its neighbourhood. This enchanting spot belongs to the Duke of Devonshire.

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